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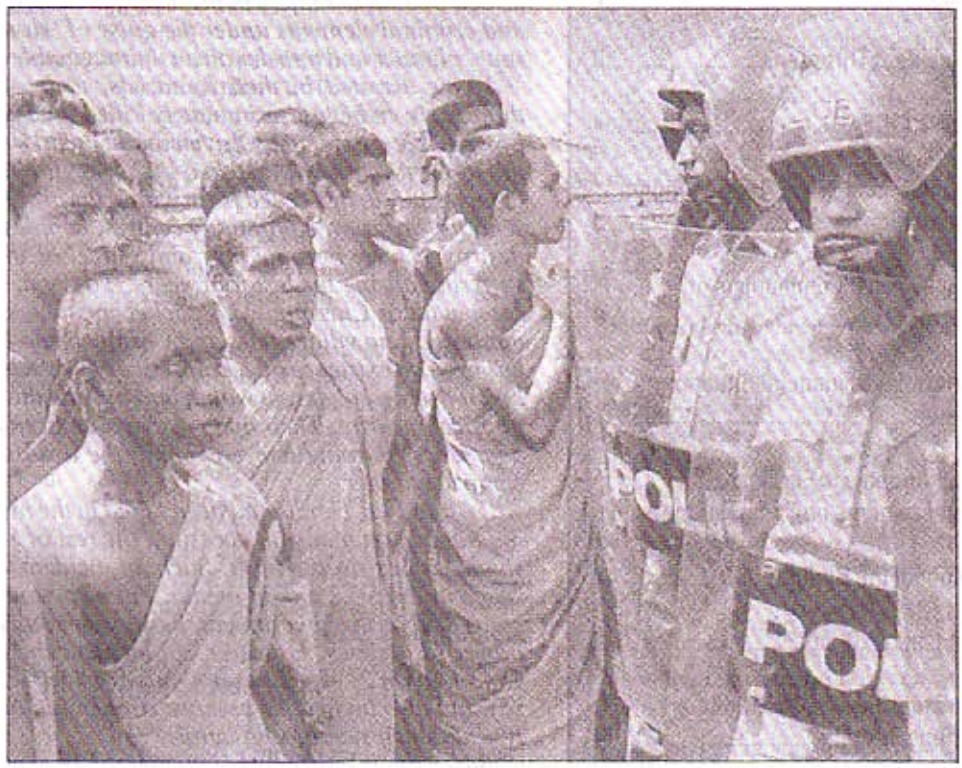
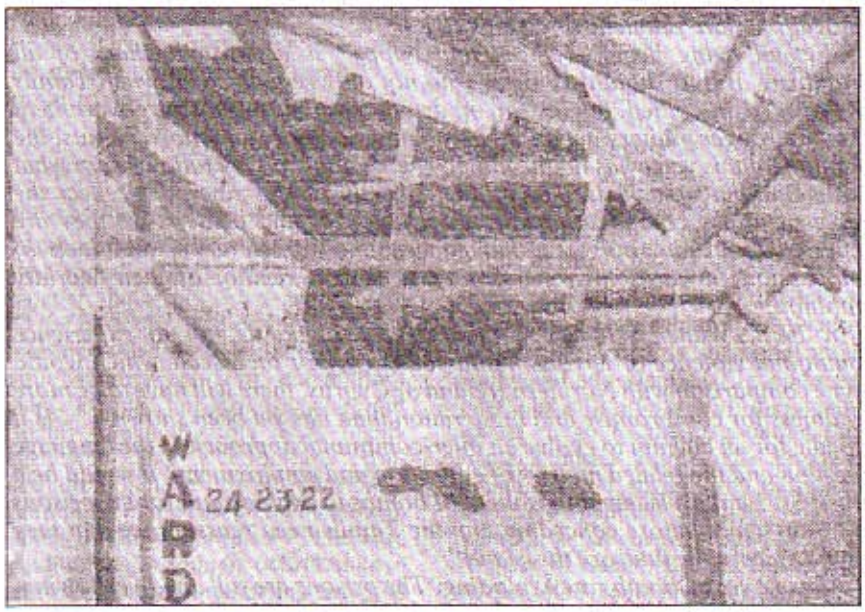
BUDDHIST PRIESTS demonstrating in Colombo demanding the resignation of President Jayawardene and urging tougher military action against Tamils in northern Sri Lanka following the bomb explosion in Colombo on 21 April 1987





THE DAMAGED wards of the Jaffna General Hospital following the rocket attack from the Jaffna Fort Army Camp on 7 March 1987.

Further damage was caused to wards 19 and 20 and house officers' quarters and 11 patients were killed and 26 other patients were injured following a similar rocket attack on 30 March 1987.

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"Let All Living Beings Be Happy Except Tamils"

THE BOMB EXPLOSION in the Sri Lankan capital on 21 April in which over 100 civilians died has been universally condemned. We unhesitatingly join in condemning the perpetrators of what has been rightly denounced as a 'cowardly, brutal and inhuman act'.

However, the sheer horror of the Colombo outrage should not drive one to under-estimate the scale and horror of the unmitigated state terrorism that has been unleashed over the years against the Tamil community in Sri Lanka. Beginning with uncontrolled mob violence, in recent years it has sought to destroy the very existence of the Tamil community as a distinct cultural and national entity.

Since the anti-Tamil pogrom of July 1983, condoned by the State, in which over 2000 Tamils perished, an estimated 9000 Tamils of all ages, mostly civilians, have been killed by the security forces in the north and east of the country. Under the pretext of 'combating terrorism', arbitrary killings have been continuing uninterruptedly almost on a daily basis. As if the troops were not reaching their expected quota of killings, the government trained and armed Sinhalese settlers in the Tamil areas and introduced a rag-bag of thugs and criminal elements under the guise of 'Home Guards' to carry out arson, rape, plunder and murder on an unimaginable scale.

To be arrested in their hundreds, to be detained and tortured in their thousands, to be indiscriminately killed in tens, fifties and not infrequently in hundreds at a time, to be driven out of their homes and villages which are then put to the torch, to be attacked by naval gun boats, to be bombed and strafed from the air, to be shelled from within the army camps, to witness their homes, schools, libraries, community centres, temples, churches and hospitals being destroyed have become part and parcel of the Tamil people's daily diet of suffering during the last four years. To them, there have been no New Year, Deepavali or Christmas, no cricket encounters with foreign teams, no sports jamborees, no village fetes and Carnivals, no festivals or celebrations. Theirs has been an existence on a knife edge between life and death. Theirs has been a life of fleeing, to places, within and outside the land of their birth, in search of physical security. Their main activity has been to search for their disappeared dear ones, burying and cremating the dead and running from one refugee camp to another.

If a hundred Tamils had been killed in the most gruesome manner, as in fact did happen on many an occasion, the rest of Sri Lanka would not have lost a single night's sleep over it. Such an incident would not only have found no space in the Sri Lankan media, but also would have been totally denied or concealed by the government, its ministers, its subservient media, even the all-powerful prelates. However, an incident such as the one which occurred in Colombo on 21 April has not only received widest possible publicity (rightly so), but also invited the severest condemnation (deservedly so), and massive revenge against innocent Tamils.

But, why this differential treatment? Is it because the Tamil people are not human beings and therefore deserve to be killed, or that their killing does not merit admission, publicity or condemnation?

"Let all living beings be well and happy" is a constant chant of all Buddhists. But to Buddhist priests who not only remain silent when Tamils are savaged and killed, but also go on demonstrations urging the government to take stronger military action, to bomb and kill more and more Tamils, the chanting of this verse has no meaning. The Buddhism they follow is not what Lord Buddha preached. The yellow robe they wear does not reflect the universal truth, compassion, tolerance, kindness and tender love they are expected to exude, but serves to conceal their intolerance, and lack of compassion: towards their fellow beings it is a symbol of their worldly ambition.

In 1975, Walter Schwarz wrote, "If Sri Lanka is not to experience communal violence or terrorism and counter-terror on a scale which would invite comparison with Northern Ireland or Cyprus, there will have to be more readiness for compromise and moderation than has yet been shown . . . Is it too late for an attempt to evolve an inter-communal approach to the language question and the related matters of education and employment? It would be a pity if Sri Lanka's leadership waited for bombs to explode and for the prisons to fill up again before conceding that the Tamils need reassurance that they have a place in the future of the island".

After 12 years, bombs are exploding. The prisons are full and overflowing. Still the reassurance that the Tamils have a place in the island seems a far cry.

PRESIDENT THREATENS:

NO ELECTIONS

THE GOVERNMENT of Sri Lanka launched extensive and indiscriminate air strikes in the Jaffna peninsula in the immediate aftermath of the bomb explosion in Colombo on April 21. After the first day's attacks, the government jubilantly claimed that its forces had killed 80 'terrorists'. Italian made Marchetti aircrafts adapted to attack ground targets with bombs, cannons and rockets took off from the Trincomalee air-base to pound Jaffna for five successive days. Helicopter gunships capable of firing 4000 rounds a minute engaged in sustained strafing of Jaffna.

Jaffna has been experiencing continuous aerial and naval attacks and long range rocket-firing from within army camps situated in Jaffna, Palali, Kankesanthurai and Navatkuli for the last few months almost on a daily basis. In the course of these attacks, many civilians were killed and homes, temples, schools and hospitals were damaged. For instance, rockets fired from the Jaffna army camp fell on the Jaffna General Hospital on more than one occasion and had destroyed certain wards and killed several patients and some hospital staff. Hence, what the people of Jaffna experienced following the Colombo explosion was not something new.

However, the difference was that there was a substantial and sustained intensification of air strikes and naval bombardments. There was another difference – on previous occasions, the government had attempted to deny that the attacks ever took place. However on this occasion, it openly declared that the air strikes had been undertaken, that they would continue uninterruptedly and that many had been killed as a consequence of these attacks. Not that the government had become truthful, but the announcements were intended to satisfy its hardline Sinhala constituency in the south.

After five days of uninterrupted air strikes, Sri Lanka's Media Centre chief, Mr. Tilak Ratnakara claimed that over four hundred 'terrorists' had been killed. When asked by a correspondent as to why the air strikes had been slowed down, he is reported to have replied that the 'pilots needed a rest'.

The government, of course, claimed that the air strikes were aimed at the LTTE and EROS 'bases' and that those killed were 'terrorists'. In the absence of ground troops, or government officials or newspaper reporters, the government could not have been in a position to know the number killed, let alone being certain that the victims were 'terrorists' and not civilians. Besides, air strikes carried out by highly qualified pilots flying highly sophisticated and electronically controlled aircrafts have proved notoriously inaccurate (as in the case of the American bombing of Libya in which F111s were used). For the government of Sri Lanka to claim that its air force flying adapted Marchetti planes from an air-base situated about one hundred miles away were able to hit the targets accurately is not something anyone could believe. On the contrary, the air strikes were deliberately intended to be indiscriminate. The intention was to take revenge against the Tamils in Jaffna for what happened in Colombo. The fact that St. Patrick's College and the office and printing presses of the Saturday Review were among the buildings that were hit during these strikes show the attacks were not necessarily aimed at so-called militant bases.

EXPLOITED TO THE FULL

The bomb explosion in Colombo and the resulting deaths have been exploited to the full by the government and the predominantly Sinhala opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party and the extremist sections of the Buddhist clergy.

The SLFP's leader, Mrs. Bandaranaike, accused the government of failing to protect the Sinhala people through lack of vigilance and care and for having been 'too soft' against the Tamil militants. Sections of the Buddhist clergy, which of late had been pushed to remain on the sidelines, found an ideal opportunity to return to the centre stage which it claims to be its rightful place.

Even defying the curfew imposed by the government in the aftermath of the blast, hundreds of Buddhist priests marched in demonstra-tion in Colombo towards the President's house in Ward Place demanding his resignation and urging a total military solution to the ethnic crisis. Another group of priests held a noisy demonstration in the hill city of Kandy.

Predictably, the government decided to outplay the opposition in its own game. Throwing discretion to the wind, the government announced the intensification of its war effort until 'terrorism' was eliminated. The Minister of National Security declared that the aerial attacks would continue against LTTE and EROS 'bases' in Jaffna until both these groups agreed to go to the negotiating table. **Prime Minister Ranasinghe Premadesa announced that anyone who advocated a negotiated political solution would be regarded as an enemy of Sri Lanka. The Minister of Lands, Gamini Dissanayake, did not mind Tamil civilian casualties and according to him "everybody who participated in terrorism should be removed from society, not arrested".** Another senior government MP, Merril Karyawasam, proved that a renegrade communist is worse than an anti-communist. He threatened to turn Jaffna into a Hiroshima after the dropping of the atom bomb.

President Junius Jayawardene did not fail his followers and went a step further. He said that until the Tamil militants surrendered their weapons, the military offensive would continue and there would be no negotiations. Insisting on the pursuit of a military victory, despite the civilian casualties that would inevitably ensue, he said '. . . it happened in Punjab (referring to the Indian government's assault on the Golden Temple at Armritsar), it happened in Vietnam, it happened in London, Hamburg and Berlin. It happened in the dropping of the atom bomb in Hiroshima'.

The President, without realising the extent to which successive Sinhala dominated governments had contributed to the escalation of the ethnic conflict reaching its present level of violent confrontation, indulged in his familiar anti-India bashing – accusing India of harbouring wanted 'Tamil terrorists', he wanted them to be returned to Sri Lanka. His tirade against the Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu, M. G. Ramachandran, was blunt and offensive. He described the LTTE as 'Mr. Ramachandran's private army'.

The government also used the opportunity to ban the traditional May Day demonstrations and rallies in spite of the objections from opposition parties.

Most intriguing was the announcement by President Jayawardene that he would not hold the general elections due in 1989 and that he would extend his own term and continue in office even after his term expired at the end of next year, although he is constitutionally debarred from seeking another Presidential term. He indicated that he could use a referendum to extend the terms of his government and himself. This is exactly what he did to avoid a general election in 1983.

It would seem apparent that there is a need for the ethnic conflict to continue unresolved and that the violence and counter-violence should persist unabated at a level and pace so as to provide a 'justification' for the continuation of his government without a general election and for him to continue as President. **Political observers are wondering whether the tragic events of the recent past have been deliberately engineered to enable the President to put into effect his diabolical plan for his government and himself to continue in office.**

GENOCIDE

Backed by British Guns, Money and Mercenaries

THE BRITISH MEDIA tried to excuse last week's Sri Lankan government air-strikes against Tamil areas of the island as a justifiable response to 'Tamil terrorism'. Meanwhile, nine Strike Master aircraft arrived in Scotland, where they are to be refurbished by British Aerospace before being sold to the Sri Lankan air force – for use in 'counter-insurgency' operations like the raid which killed 80 Tamils in one swoop last week.

Whether they are supplying planes or broadcasting sympathetic propaganda, Britain's rulers are up to their necks in the dirty war which the Sinhalese regime is waging against Tamils in what was once the British colony of Ceylon in the Indian Ocean.

The subdued, no-pictures reporting of the government air-strikes contrasted sharply with the hysterical full-colour coverage we were given of the earlier Colombo bus station bomb which killed just over 100 people. The Sri Lankan authorities blamed the bombing on the guerrilla groups fighting for the right to establish a separate Tamil state of Eelam and seized the excuse to launch the air-strikes on Tamil areas. The Tamils denied any involvement in the bus station carnage. The British media, meanwhile, acted as a press service for the Colombo government, echoing its condemnations of 'Tamil terrorism'.

This is typical of the way the conflict in Sri Lanka is reported in Britain. All we hear are occasional reports of 'outrages' committed by Tamil guerrillas. We are never told about the mass murder campaign which the Sri Lankan security forces are waging against the Tamils.

The current phase of the Sinhalese-Tamil conflict has claimed an estimated 6000 lives since an anti-Tamil pogrom erupted four years ago. The vast majority of the dead are Tamils. Tamils make up just 20 per cent of the island's population. Yet 500 of the 800 people slain this year were Tamils. Whereas real doubts are often raised about whether Tamil militias were involved in the killings of Sinhalese, nobody doubts who is killing Tamils.

They are the victims of a government policy of genocide, carried out through bombing raids, shell attacks and army assaults on the Tamil-held areas in the northern province of Jaffna.

Most of the Tamils killed this year were crushed beneath Operations Giant Step, which sent government troops and armour burning and blasting their way through Tamil areas, backed by the air force. The Colombo propaganda machine shrugs off questions about its actions by insisting that every Tamil killed – men, women and children alike – is a 'terrorist'.

The British authorities have good reason to endorse the Sri Lankan government's cover-up. Britain is to blame for the island's communal strife in the first place. When Sri Lanka was a British colony from 1796 until 1948, Empire statesmen used classic divide-and-rule tactics to keep the communities at each other's throats. Today, the Tory government continues to sponsor the bloodshed. It provides arms, money and political support for the Sinhalese regime's anti-Tamil campaign.

Recent revelations have also exposed how the British government has indirectly sent troops to Sri Lanka, through the mercenary agency KMS Ltd. This company is essentially an MI6 front which never acts without foreign office permission. The former SAS assassins on its books have been busy training Sri Lanka's Special Task Force, a murder gang responsible for the bloodiest Tamil massacres. The Tories claim that the British 'advisers' are restraining the indisciplined Sri Lankan soldiers. This is the old lie which the British used in Uganda, where they trained an army which has slaughtered half a million since the seventies.

Days before the recent upturn in violence, Tory immigration minister David Waddington went to Sri Lanka to check up on his new system of visa controls, designed to stop Tamil refugees fleeing to Britain. Waddington made no bones about the British government's support for the murderous regime. 'If there is a problem of lack of discipline', he claimed, 'it seems perfectly reasonable for the Sri Lankan authorities to seek help from outside.' The real 'lack of discipline' worrying the Tories is the Tamils' refusal to accept the repressive order which the Western powers have imposed on Sri Lanka. In the face of

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LTTE'S 'PUNITIVE ACTION' FOR ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON KITTU

SATHASIVAM KRISHNAKUMAR, popularly known as Kittu, the Jaffna District Commander of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) was seriously injured in a grenade attack on 30 March while travelling by car in the Jaffna peninsula. It was reported that two of Kittu's colleagues were fatally wounded in the attack.

The LTTE accused the Eelam Peoples Liberation Front (EPRLF) and the Tamil Eelam Liberation Organisation for the assassination attempt, and reacted swiftly by rounding up suspected members of these groups. It will be recalled that the LTTE virtually eliminated the TELO by military action last year and launched a similar offensive against the EPRLF early this year.

Neither the EPRLF nor the TELO has accepted responsibility for the attempted assassination of Kittu, but the LTTE would appear to be certain that these groups were responsible.

There is no confirmation of the number of victims of LTTE's retaliatory 'punitive action'. LTTE has categorically denied the accusation that several dozen suspected members of these groups fell victims to their 'punitive action' and that over a hundred have been held in detention by the LTTE. Not surprisingly, the state-controlled media in Sri Lanka has published exaggerated accounts stating that LTTE has massacred over a hundred.

In a statement made in Madras, the LTTE spokesman Mr. A. S. Balasingham said that "this is a malicious propaganda carried out by Sri Lankan media to discredit our movement and divert attention from the genocidal crimes committed on our people by the Sri Lankan armed forces. There has been a clash between the LTTE fighters and cadres from other organisations in which two of our fighters and 18 members of other groups were killed. The incident took place in Jaffna when some members of other groups, who were held under house arrest for investigation, attempted to escape by seizing our weapons".

IMPLICATIONS OF U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS RESOLUTION

THE THRUST of official propaganda on the subject has been that a covert Indian attempt to gain acceptance at the CHR for an Argentine sponsored Resolution which was politically motivated and blatantly one-sided and intended to blacken Sri Lanka's name in a Human Rights context, was thwarted by Sri Lanka Government's diplomacy, which brought about a watered-down Resolution accepted by consensus with SLG's acquiescence. The political reality seems somewhat different.

Context

1. Sponsorship of the Resolution was not by Argentina alone (and this is a democratic Argentina, whose elected Government is taking action against HR violations by its predecessor Junta), but also by Canada and Norway,two donors whose goodwill we need.

2. The Resolution was set firmly within an HR framework for, in its preamble the CHR claimed to be guided by universally accepted rules of international humanitarian law and in its operative section the CHR called on SLG specifically to cooperate with the ICRC in disseminating and promoting such law. The CHR has thus gone on record that there is an adverse HR situation here which requires cognisance and comment, whilst identifying the SLG specifically and alone as requiring to upgrade its HR performance.

3. The Resolution is to be seen as the outcome of a three-year watching brief which the CHR has maintained over the HR situation here, because it recalls the CHR's decision of 1984 and notes the Reports of its Special Rapporteur on torture and of its Working Group on enforced or involuntary disappearances (both presumably in respect of the SL situation). That is to say, that the CHR now deems the situation to have so deteriorated during that 'probationary period' as to warrant inscription of a resolution.

Import

4. The prospect initially facing SLG was acceptance by a majority of a highly critical resolution damaging to SLG's international standing. The outcome, claimed to represent a diplomatic victory, has been a consensual resolution which, as will be spelled out below, is not only critical of SLG's HR performance (vide paragraphs 3 & 4 above) but undermines the foundation of SLG's position, that it is engaged in fighting a terrorist threat to law and order. Moreover, the Resolution as adopted implicitly recognises the validity of the Tamil claim that it is engaged in resisting (even if violently) a diminution of its HRs and fundamental freedoms. It is a moot point, whether or not it is preferable to be called by some 'a scoundrel' whilst a few others testify to your goodness, or be said by all to be 'a cad'.

5. The Resolution calls upon "all parties and groups", without identification or distinction, to forswear violence and negotiate a peaceful settlement. In as much as there are only two parties to the internal conflict situation under reference, SLG and the Tamil militants, this equates the two in terms of responsibility for violence and undermines the 'terrorism – law and order' argument.

6. It also calls on all parties and groups to pursue a negotiated political solution "based on principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms". In as much as it is the State or Government (SLG) which has the role and responsibility to uphold and apply HRs and fundamental freedoms in respect of all its citizens and the only other combatant in the conflict situation is a militant-armed section of the Tamil community, the implication is inescapable that the conflict itself is deemed by the CHR to constitute a diminution if not violation of HRs and fundamental rights of Tamils.

7. The only comfort the SLG may draw from the Resolution is that the CHR has called on the Tamil militants also to desist from violence and negotiate a peaceful settlement.

Conclusion

8. The outcome has been, therefore:

(a) that the CHR has gone on record, having watched the situation for three years, that there is an adverse HR situation here which warrants cognisance and comment by it.

(b) that this situation stems from an internal conflict between parties it equates in respect of responsibility, and

(c) that the conflict lies within a context of diminished or violated HRs and fundamental freedoms which require to be restored by a negotiated political solution.

9. India could not have wished for a better preparation of the diplomatic ground, as it were, in respect of any future initiatives she may contemplate on behalf of the Tamils. One must then ask: might it not have been a clever diplomatic move by India to work for a toughly-worded resolution, which could then, in bargaining, be exchanged for a milder but consensual one, committing the entire international community in support of her perception and approach?

Susantha Dias

(Courtesy of 'Lanka Guardian', 1.4.87)

TAMIL NADU TRAIN TRAGEDY

Tamil Militant Link Ruled Out

Tragedy struck the Rockfort Express on March 15, when it fell from a bridge ripped by a blast near Ariyalur. A case of sabotage, it resulted in the death of over 20 people and the maiming of and injuries to several others.

INSPITE of the absence of hard evidence, attempts were made by interested groups to link the Tamil militants with the recent train tragedy in Tamil Nadu. The perpetrators of this tragedy had planted a powerful bomb beneath the rail track.

A hitherto unknown radical group, fighting for secession of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu was behind the blast of the railway bridge, killing 26 passengers, according to Tamil Nadu police sources.

Tamil Nadu Police Inspector General, Rajasekharan said that a 28 year old activist belonging to the Tamil Nadu Liberation Army had been arrested and gelignite sticks of the kind used in the explosion had been seized. It is reported that this group favoured, among other things, formation of a separate state of Khalistan and that it had no links with Sri Lankan Tamil militant groups. Rajasekharan said that the earlier suspicions about the involvement of Sri Lankan Tamil militants had turned out to be unfounded.

KIWIS CALL OFF CRICKET TOUR

New Zealand's cricketers returned home from Colombo after their tour of Sri Lanka was called off because the New Zealand Cricket Council feared that the players could become victims of escalating violence in Sri Lanka.

It is the first time a New Zealand team has had to be withdrawn while on tour. Fears for their safety heightened after the recent bomb explosion in Sri Lanka's capital city, Colombo on April 21.

The team had been due to travel to the central highland city of Kandy for the second Test match which was due to begin on 23 April, but the Manager, Ken Deas, said that there was disquiet within the team and a universal feeling that the tour should end.

SEPARATISTS, COMMUNISTS OR TERRORISTS?

By Edward Benedict, M.A.

CRAVING FOR the sympathy of the world community and unable to disprove the justness of the Tamil demand, the Sinhala government is trying to use labels with certain connotations to discredit the Tamils. Lies when repeated often tend to assume a certain degree of authenticity, and it is about time we put these slanders to rest.

Are The Tamils Separatists?

A "Nation" is a historically evolved stable community of people, formed on the basis of a common language, territory, economic life and psychological make-up manifested in a common culture. By this definition, the island of Sri Lanka has two nations of people. From time immemorial, the two nations have governed themselves separately. Even the Dutch and the Portuguese conquerors kept them as separate nations. The British too ruled them separately for almost forty years.

In 1833, Britain for its administrative convenience, artificially and without the consent of either nation, brought them together. When the British quit, although they left the island with one government, they took the precaution of protecting the minority nation with a constitution, which had ***specific, entrenched (unalterable) provisions for their safety.*** *This constitution formed the legal contract by which the two nations agreed to a certain form of government.*

This constitution has since been abandoned. If the two nations had mutually agreed to break this contract, or to replace it with another mutually agreeable contract there would be no dispute. But the Tamils as a nation of people did not in any form or manner give their consent either to the abandonment or to the enactments of the two subsequent constitutions.

Therefore, in consideration of this breach of contract, the Tamil people have no further obligations to accept the other aspects of the contract, especially the unitary form of government. The insistence on the part of the Sinhalese that the Tamils do otherwise, using physical force, is patently illegal.

As Mr. Thiruchelvam put it, the Tamil nation in the island of Sri Lanka is currently being ruled illegally, "without consent, without conquest and without a constitution". All that the Tamil people are seeking now is a de facto restoration of their sovereignty, to which they are legally entitled. To characterise this as anything else is not only unfair but downright dishonest.

Are The Tamils Communists?

Anthropologists who have studied the Tamil people in the island of Sri Lanka have determined that they are a "mercantile society", as opposed to a "peasant society". Their orientation places greater value on achievements of individuals and those of family units, rather than that of their society or the nation.

The merits of this orientation are debatable. But, the fact of the matter is that, such orientation is antithetical to communism. It is well known that Socialism and Communism as a way of life cannot flourish in such a society.

That this is not merely an academic theory has been proven over and over again in the parliamentary elections in Sri Lanka. Whereas the Sinhalese people have elected over thirty leftist candidates at many of the elections, the Tamil people have, during the same period, elected only one communist and that too only once.

It is against the very ethos of the Tamil people to be communists. To characterise them as such is merely vicious propaganda.

Are The Tamils Terrorists?

Terrorism simply means using violence as a political weapon. The term terrorism is widely used, but in common usage it is poorly defined. As a result it encompasses wide and varied types of activities.

It is also a politically loaded term and depending on the experience of individuals and nations, it evokes different (and sometimes very strong) emotions, without due regard to the context in which it is used.

Small underground groups, with no broad based support of the society, such as the Red Brigade and Bader Meinkoff are referred to as terrorists. The Palestinians fighting for their homeland are also called terrorists. The British considered George Washington and Menachim Begin to be terrorists. Paradoxically, however, fascists like Adolf Hitler and Idi Amin were never called terrorists.

In Sri Lanka, for thirty years, a nation of people were debased, terrorised and brutalised by another nation. Unable to endure this any longer the former produced an army to defend their nation.

In the Sinhala lexicon the "goondas" who beat up the Tamil members of parliament are not terrorists; the hooligans who looted, raped and killed Tamils in their thousands and at recurrent intervals (just because they belonged to a community that disagreed with their government) are not terrorists; the Sinhala leaders who organised these pogroms hoping to terrorise Tamils into submission are not terrorists; the Security forces that tortured and killed thousands of innocent civilians are not terrorists.

But, an army of dedicated young men and women whose love for their people is larger than life; who in turn are adored by their people; some of whom have made the supreme sacrifice for the sake of their convictions based on conscience; and others consumed by their passion for freedom and justice for their people, willing to make that sacrifice themselves – are terrorists.

No wonder they are having difficulty selling their point of view to the world community. As stated at the beginning, lies when repeated often enough tend to acquire a certain degree of authenticity. It is the responsibility of all expatriate Tamils to see to it that it does not happen to the Sinhala lies.

Any analysis of the Sri Lankan political programme in the post-independence era will point to the incontestable fact that it is the Sinhala people who were and are still the Separatists. Ceylonese and Sinhalese were used interchangably.

Terrorism, whether it stemmed from the goondas, or supported by the Government, had its origin from the Sinhala people. Hence Sinhalese were the original terrorists. As for the charge that Tamils are communists, it is the Sinhala political constituencies which carried Communist candidates to represent in Parliament.

In Sri Lanka Nationalism was equated with Communalism. Sinhala Nationalism produced Tamil Nationalism. Sinhala Terrorism used offensively produced Tamil Terrorism. These are polar models.

Disinformation Par Excellence

THE 'SRI LANKA NEW-LETTER' of March 1987 issued by the Consulate General for Sri Lanka in Geneva, Switzerland, reporting on the resolution recently adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights said:

"On March 12, the Commission adopted a Resolution on Sri Lanka by consensus which, inter-alia, called on the terrorist groups 'to respect fully the universally accepted rules of humanitarian law' and 'to renounce the use of force and acts of violence and to pursue a negotiated political solution'.

This report, rather disingenuously, purports to convey the impression that the resolution on this aspect only referred to the 'terrorist groups'. Reproduced here, without further comment, are the texts of the two relevant paragraphs of the resolution:

"Calls upon all parties and groups to respect fully the universally accepted rules of humanitarian law.

"Calls upon all parties and groups to renounce the use of force and acts of violence and to pursue a negotiated political solution, based on principles of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms."

Who said that diplomats are not those who are paid to lie on behalf of their countries?

Incidentally, it is learnt that Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Sri Lankan Ambassador in Geneva has submitted his resignation. While it may be true that his resignation is a direct consequence of his appointment to a high level post within the U.N. set-up, it is reliably rumoured that the immediate cause of the resignation was that he had a 'big row' with the President's brother, Harry Jayawardene, who headed the Sri Lankan delegation to the U.N. Commission on Human Rights.

A DIABOLICAL PLOT?

Bleak Trend In Lanka

LAST WEEK'S car-bomb explosion in Colombo and the Sri Lankan armed forces' murderous campaign against Tamil civilians in the north, which followed it, signify a qualitative degeneration of the strife-torn situation in the island. **President Jayawardene's government has sought to establish a straightforward casual connection between the two developments and held two Tamil militant groups, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam and the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students, responsible for Tuesday's bomb blast which took toll of more than 150 lives. However, the opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party hardly known for its sympathy for the cause of the Tamils, has questioned the government's version in that country's parliament. It has in fact claimed that the car-bombing was an "inside job" carried out with Israeli help. This is a serious charge, all the more so because it comes from the SLFP.**

It is indeed hard to understand why the LTTE and/or EROS should have wanted to explode a powerful bomb in the middle of a busy commercial district. First of all, they would have known that such an attack would certainly invite retaliation on a massive scale and only increase their casualties in the Jaffna peninsula and weaken them. Secondly, it is difficult to believe that the guerrilla groups indulged in a deliberate act of provocation so as to convince the ordinary Tamils that armed warfare against Colombo is the only way of resolving the ethnic crisis; given the war that has been going on in the peninsula since January, such a provocation seems unnecessary. The militants virtually run Jaffna peninsula as their fief and could have no interest in being on a murderous attack on their supporters.

Even more unconvincing is the argument that the car-bombing was a way of breaking the so-called unilateral ceasefire declared by the government. The plain fact is that the militant groups had refused to reciprocate the ceasefire offer and had done so from a position of relative strength, not weakness. It would not have been in their interest to wreck the arrangement which, in any case, the government had itself weakened. **By the same logic, it was in Colombo's interest to plant the bomb, call off the ceasefire and declare an all-out war on the Tamils. That is exactly what has happened, as the carpet-bombing of Jaffna for days on end shows.**

This is not to argue that there is enough evidence of a diabolical plot hatched with the assistance of Israeli agents but only to suggest that this hypothesis seems far more plausible than the official explanation.

At any rate, the way Colombo has used the event to wreck the process of negotiation can only strengthen this proposition. **But by doing so, the Sri Lankan government has also succeeded in virtually destroying India's mediatory role.** This calls for a fresh assessment in New Delhi.

By courtesy of "The Times of India"
April 27, 1987

(Emphasis ours: Editor)

Pressure on Colombo to Allow Red Cross Teams

LEADING MEMBERS of the U.S. Committee to Stop Genocide of Tamils in Sri Lanka, met the Ambassadors of Norway, Sweden, Canada and Argentina and urged them to bring pressure on the Jayawardene Government to allow the International Red Cross (IRC) to send relief teams to Sri Lanka to provide urgently-needed medical relief to Tamils wounded in the security operations against Tamil militants.

They also took the occasion to praise the role of these countries in bringing the human rights violations against the minority Tamils before the U.N. Human Rights Commission at Geneva in March and appealed to them to maintain these efforts.

Norway, Canada and Argentina co-sponsored a resolution before the Commission expressing concern at the human rights violation in Sri Lanka and asking the Colombo authorities to allow immediate access to the IRC to the areas where serious clashes have occurred.

Those who met the Ambassadors included Dr. S. Ilangovan, Dr. Benjamin Raj, President of the Tamils' Welfare and Human Rights Association, and Mr. M. M. Raj. The Committee includes prominent Tamils both from India and Sri Lanka and also American human rights activists like Prof. George Hart of California and Mrs. Virginia Kirchner. The Committee, which is based at Chicago, has held several seminars focusing on the Tamil minority.

***Medical Association offer:** According to Dr. Ilangovan, the American Overseas Medical Association (AOMA) has offered to organise relief needed by Tamils at Jaffna and other affected areas, but is hamstrung in carrying out the relief operations because of the refusal of the Jayawardene Government to permit the IRC to enter Sri Lanka. He said it was regrettable that the Sri Lankan Government was neither providing relief nor was it allowing willing international voluntary organisations to render aid.*

Most of the foreign medical associations, including the AOMA, would like to route their assistance through an umbrella organisation like the Red Cross. The American Red Cross stood ready to provide the wherewithal but it too prefers to work through the IRC.

Mr. Ilangovan said the Ambassadors met by the Committee members were receptive to the idea of activating efforts to persuade the Sri Lankan Government to allow the IRC to play its usual humanitarian role in areas experiencing severe violence and they could be expected to relay the wishes of medical associations and human rights activists to their governments. The Canadian External Relations Department has already assured in a letter that "Canada will continue to follow closely the situation in Sri Lanka and raise human rights concerns."

SRI LANKA'S DENIAL REBUTTED

PAX CHRISTI INTERNATIONAL, a U.N. recognised Non-Governmental Organisation, accused the government of Sri Lanka of gross violation of human rights including the use of foreign mercenaries in the course of its intervention during the recently held 43rd sessions of the U.N. Human Rights Commission. The following is the text of a letter dated 10th March, 1987 delivered to the Sri Lankan delegation, with copies to other delegations, in response to Sri Lanka's reply:

Your delegation, in exercise of her right of reply, made a number of assertions against Pax Christi International and our statement on the situation in Sri Lanka. Since NGO's have no right of reply and these allegations are an attempt to discredit all NGO's, we are compelled to respond by means of this letter.

1. Sources of information

Pax Christi International receives its information from a variety of sources based within Sri Lanka itself. These include members of Pax Christi within the country, local and national human and civil rights organisations, citizens' committees and trade union organisations.

2. "That press reports are false"

The Sri Lankan government cannot dismiss as false propaganda the revelation made last week in the British press (enclosed) by 60 British mercenaries employed by the London security firm, who walked out of Sri Lanka in protest, because of a series of atrocities committed against the Tamil civilian population by the Special Task Force commando units they had trained.

3. "That the information on the amassing of troops in the Jaffna peninsula and the military offensive is false"

Pax Christi International has received the above information from various reliable sources, including human rights organisations and citizens' groups within the country, certain governments and the international press. In fact, in confirmation of the fears we voiced, we have just received information that only yesterday some 50 people have been killed in Jaffna in a military operation, and an unknown number injured.

Adrien-Claude Zoller
Permanent Representative

'SRI LANKA'S FINANCIAL SITUATION GRAVE'

SRI LANKA'S Finance Minister, Ronnie de Mel, has warned the Government that the financial situation of the country is becoming extremely grave as a result of rapidly escalating defence expenditure and expenditure of other Ministries would have to be reduced if defence expenditure was to be maintained at the present high levels. Otherwise Sri Lanka would face a severe financial crisis before long.

Defence and defence-related expenditure has already escalated to about Rs. 15 billion, which represents 35 per cent of Sri Lanka's domestic budget of Rs. 40 billion, excluding aid and loans. This is acknowledged to be one of the highest defence budgets of any country of the size of Sri Lanka.

Mr. de Mel has also pointed out that defence and defence-related expenditure is likely to increase and not decline in present circumstances.

A Supplementary Vote for Rs. 2 billion over and above the allocation made in the budget was presented to the government on 11 March by the Defence Ministry.

Mr. de Mel has also stated that the financial situation of the country has been further aggravated by a number of other factors:–

- *The sharp fall in the prices of our principal export commodities like tea, rubber and coconut. This fall in prices has seriously eroded the revenue Government obtained from the plantation industries.*
- *While the prices of our export commodities remain depressed, the prices of some of our major imports, such as crude oil and wheat, have risen recently.*
- *The severe drought now afflicting the country will have serious repercussions on the production of all our crops, particularly paddy, coconut, tea, rubber and subsidary foodstuffs. This will also reduce agricultural incomes and personal consumption, which would lead to a drop in revenue from income tax and Business Turnover Tax.*
- *Additional funds will also have to be allocated for drought relief, which will further reduce the funds available to the Treasury.*
- *The 30 per cent drop in rice production, particularly from the North and East.*
- *The 50 per cent decline in tourism and tourist earnings.*
- *The 50% decline in fish production.*
- *The decline in internal trade and distribution, particularly in the North and East.*
- *The decline in foreign investment and foreign remittances.*

23 CHARGED WITH SEDITION

TWENTY-THREE political activists, mostly belonging to the Sinhalese community in South Sri Lanka, have been indicted before the High Court on 14 counts including 'conspiracy' to overthrow the government by armed violence.

There are some belonging to the Tamil community too including the leader of the Eelam Peoples Revolutionary Front (EPRLF) and R. Manikkalingam, son of a former Sri Lankan diplomat:

Dayan Jayatilleke de Silva, alias, K. K.; Susil George "Joe" Seneviratne; Dayapala Thiranagama, alias Loku Silva; Pulsara Liyanage, alias Pulsie; Chinthana de Silva, alias Kamal; Purnaka de Silva, alias Lalith; Periyaswamy Muthulingam alias Muthu; K. Padmanabha, alias Ranjan; R. Manikkalingam, alias Mohan; R. A. Jayaratne, alias Jegan; K. I. Sarath Gamini, alias Stanley; Piyadasa Gallege, alias Cyril; L. Caldera, alias Dickie; G. M. Dharmasena, alias Ralahamy; H. K. Dayananda, alias Shantha; K. Karunadasa, alias Leo; M. K. Karunaratne, alias Suda; C. R. K. Henry Iqbal, alias Ibba; T. Sarath Silva, alias Podi Silva; K. Piyadasa, alias Manager; Ariyadasa, alias Ari; and W. Chitrasena, alias Michael.

Here are some of the leading members:

Dayan Jayatilleke, a political journalist. Got a first-class in political science at Peradeniya winning the C. C. Wickremasinghe Award and was a visiting lecturer at Colombo University. Fulbright scholar at State University of New York, working under well-known Marxist academics like Immanuel Wallerstein and James Petras. Has been missing for more than a year.

Joe Seneviratne, former National Organiser and General Secretary of the Movement for Inter-Racial Justice and Equality. Joined the CP (Peking) at 15. Was a full-time trade unionist and actively responsible for instigating the railway strike of 1976, which led to the general strike. Also edited various trade union newspapers. Taught sometimes at Carey College. Married with three children. Arrested in Wennappuwa last April.

Dayapala Thiranagama, graduate of Kelaniya University and the Asian Institute of Technology. Former Lecturer at the Dept. of Geography, Kelaniya and Vice-President, Kelaniya University Teachers' Association. Joined the JVP in 1968 and broke away with G. I. D. Dharkmasekera in 1970. Arrested in 1971 over the attempt to blow up the U.S. Embassy and spent six years in jail. Was re-arrested before the NAM conference as a security threat.

Pulsara Liyanage, educated at St. Paul's Milagiriya, Kelaniya and Peradeniya Universities. Well-known woman activist. Asst-Lecturer in Classics at Kelaniya University. Was arrested at her home last November. Close personal friend and cousin of Dayan Jayatilleke.

Chinthana de Silva, educated at Trinity and St. Thomas' Colleges. Was an executive at Apothecaries and Hotel Inter-Continental. Contested the Colombo DDC elections in 1980 on the JVP ticket, then left it. Active in Christian circles. Missing.

Purnaka de Silva, son of a well-known businessman. Educated at St. Thomas' College. Was formerly a money broker at one of Colombo's leading establishments. Missing.

Ramanujan Manikkalingam, son of a former Sri Lankan diplomat, whose "disappearance" was much highlighted last year. Subsequently, the authorities admitted before the PTA Advisory Board that he was not arrested in the eastern province but in Colombo and that he was taken in on the day he "disappeared", 28th March and not 11th April as originally claimed. He got 8 distinctions at his O levels and 4 A's at his A levels at Royal College, where he also was a sportsman. Studied physics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Tamil Welfare & Human Rights Committee

WE EXPRESS our shock, despair and sadness at the slaughter of civilians in Sri Lanka which has been going on incessantly for the past three months. We feel that it is barbaric and inhuman to kill or even injure civilians whether they are Tamils or Sinhalese. We further urge the Sri Lankan government to cease all military activities including aerial and naval bombings and mass killings of Tamil civilians and not to settle anymore Sinhalese of questionable character in the eastern region till a peaceful settlement is arrived at.

If the Sri Lankan government does not deal with the moderates in good faith, extremists would take over the control of the situation and the government must thereafter, assume full responsibility for the grave consequences and cannot feign innocence. We urge the government to permit the International Red Cross to visit the northern and eastern provinces and treat the suffering civilians.

218 Congressional Lane,
No. T2, Rockville,
Maryland 20852, USA

Dr. Benjamin J. Raj
President

TULF APPEALS TO FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS ON TAMIL REFUGEES

The following is the text of an appeal sent by Mr. A. Amirthalungam, the leader of the TULF, to the Heads of Governments of countries where there are Tamil refugees.

"I thank you, your government, people of your country, for graciously affording shelter and relief to the Tamil refugees who are victims of the genocidal politico-military strategy adopted by the Sri Lankan Government.

I seek your kind indulgence to apprise you of the horrendous consequences of the ethnic carnage, started by Sinhala hoodlums in June–July 1983 and continued till now by the racist armed forces of Sri Lanka. With a full sense of responsibility I state that (a) 3000 Tamils were brutally murdered in June–July 1983 by Sinhala gons; (b) 8000 to 9000 non-combatant Tamil civilians were killed by the armed forces since then; (c) over 200 Tamil villages in the North and East of Sri Lanka have been devastated and destroyed; (d) more than twenty-five thousand Tamil houses, shops and even temples and churches have been destroyed; (e) over 500,000 Tamils have been rendered homeless and destitute; (f) at any given time over 2500 Tamils, particularly young men and women, are in detention for long periods and being tortured.

The armed forces strafe from air into crowded residential areas in the Tamil majority North and East killing persons; they drop bombs from the air and they fire shells and mortars from army camps, killing persons and destroying buildings.

Reputed international organisations and responsible government officials have testified to these acts of state oppression. Recently, a spokesman of Amnesty International, testifying before an American Congress Committee, stated – "Hundreds of people have been and continue to be tortured, to be killed at random in cold blood and to disppear at the hands of the security personnel in Sri Lanka". These abuses were widespread and systematic. The most disturbing pattern of abuses that had emerged in the last few years was the phenomenon of disappearances. Mr. Robert A. Peck of the American State Department, testifying at the same hearing confirmed the gross violation of human rights by the Sri Lankan armed forces. Reputed journalists who have visited the affected areas have also confirmed these cruel acts of the Sri Lankan armed forces.

It is in the face of this terror that Tamils have fled to various countries as refugees. It will not be an exaggeration to say that every Tamil family in Sri Lanka has been afflicted in some way.

I am ashamedly aware of some misdemeanours committed by a few Tamil refugees. You will appreciate that the presence of a few black sheep among hundreds of thousands of Tamil refugees facing persecution in their own country is inevitable. I am confident you will not punish the many for the faults of a few.

The atrocities continue with increased fury and frequency. More and more Tamils are fleeing their country. I earnestly appeal to you and your government to grant asylum to those who are already in your country and to generously admit those who will come in the future. I appeal to you and your government to accommodate my compatriots till normalacy returns to the Tamil areas of Sri Lanka and Tamils can return to their homes with safety, dignity and honour."

TAMILS: The Jews of the Eighties

THE MORAL and political dilemma raised by the 58 Tamil refugees seeking sanctuary in this country will not go away once their individual feats have been decided. The hapless Tamils, whom the government is seeking to deport, are among a growing wave of asylum-seekers, dubbed the "new refugees."

Unlike their predecessors – displaced Jews from Nazi Germany, post-1956 Hungarians, or Russian dissidents – these refugees are mainly fleeing from undeveloped countries, like Uganda, Vietnam, Afghanistan and now Sri Lanka. They don't have Central or Eastern European accents and western ways. They are fleeing countries which often seem volatile and baffling to the west. Moreover, while there were jobs galore for postwar refugees, there are precious few for the "new" ones.

The government's fear is of being "swamped" with exiles. In 1985, for example, Britain was approached by 5,000 asylum-seekers – 2,000 of them Tamils. Six years before, only 1,500 people had applied to us for refugee status. Should a sensible and humane government raise or lower the drawbridge? This govenment, after accepting the first influx of Tamils, decided to force subsequent asylum-seekers to obtain entry visas in their own country – a laborious, potentially dangerous process which would deter many. It was for circumventing this obstacle that these 58 Tamils incurred the government's wrath, suspicion and deportation order.

All Tamils, after the early few, have had to prove, individually, that they deserve asylum. The overwhelming majority – 907 out of 978 whose applications were dealt with in 1985 – were refused refugee status, but were granted leave to remain here on exceptional grounds. This means temporary asylum and expires after twelve months though even this temporary refugee has been denied the 58.

Is it all a matter of government whim? Amid a maze of definitions, the 1951 United Nations convention states clearly that a refugee is: "A person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social gorup or political opinion is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or unwilling to avail himself of the protection of his country." The government's role is to decide whether someone seeking asylum meets this criterion.

Before attempting to deport anyone, the government should bring in the independent immigrant advisory service. Instead, it tried to deprive the Tamils of this right. Later the government tried other ruses, like conning them into boarding a plane bound for Bangladesh, knowing full well that the Bangladeshis would promptly hand them over to the Sri Lanka government. The justification seemed to be: the Tamils tried to trick their way into the country with false papers, so why play straight with them?

The only *real* question should be: do these Tamils genuinely face persecution in Sri Lanka? "Persecution" covers treatment ranging from discrimination to genocide – though, of course, one may lead to another. In the late thirties, when Jews were being pushed to leave Germany, and were being squeezed out of business, this country failed to acknowledge what lay in store for them. Many were refused admission and left to face the "final solution". In deciding the authenticity of today's refugees, the government must avoid repeating that fatal scepticism.

Courtesy of New Society, 27 February 1987

NIGHT OF THE BLOODBATH

SATURDAY, 7 MARCH, will go down in the current history of Jaffna, as another Black Saturday.

Even as people were lazily creeping out of their beds on a cold Saturday morning, 3 planes skirted the Nallur area around 6.30 a.m. Then suddenly the planes swooped down to drop their lethal charges. The air was rent with screeching 'bombs', falling trees and burning houses. People ran helter-skelter, some to the safety of their homes. As one eye-witness observed, "I was standing at the public water tap to draw water, when I told my neighbour that there was a bomber heading this way. It was ominous, I told my neighbour. Within minutes the plane swooped down to drop those notorious 'incendiaries'."

This "aerial escapade" by Sri Lanka's Air Force lasted for nearly thirty minutes to an hour during which time there was a trail of blood and destruction. Two people died and many injured. Ponnammah (40), wife of Balakrishnan, Nallur Kandasamy Temple Musician, who received serious injuries succumbed to her injuries at the General Hospital. The pantry portion of Thiagarajah's house at Nallur was ripped by a blast. The occupants who had a little before placed a kettle on the boil preparatory to tea-making and gone into the interior of the house, escaped injury providentially but their neighbour and child received severe injuries.

Nallur was just a prelude to a bloodbath on a larger scale, twelve hours later around 6.45 p.m. when the Jaffna Fort ramparts reverberated with the sounds of shell-fire which lasted for nearly an hour and thereafter intermittently and even in the early hours of Sunday morning. The targets for shell-fire were areas around Windsor, Rajah, Shanthi Theatres, Jumma Mosque Lane, Koddady, 3rd Cross Street, Kannathiddy and of course "pot shots" at the Jaffna General Hospital, injuring 15 hospital workers and 2 policemen. Damage by bombing and shelling is yet to be estimated but early reports indicate that it was extensive. Three shops at K.K.S. Road were burnt down by incendiary bombs. Wards No. 22, 23 and 24 were damaged.

21 people, including 9 Muslims, lost their lives in this unbridled fury unleashed by the Security Forces on Saturday. They are a Muslim family of three – A. Ameen (26), his wife S. H. Segadoon (22) and daughter Aspin (4 years old), Sameer Badurdeen Hussein (20), M. Yoosoof (22), M. Sahib (35), M. Jaffar (28), A. Sirojin (26), Mohamed Sultan (23), M. Jeyasingham (20), K. Gunaratnam (25), S. Sri-Kanth (27), S. Suppiah (34), K. Manivannan (10), S. Rasiah (53), N. Dharmarajah (18), V. Kandasamy (27), R. Radhakrishnan (19), A. Jeyam (20), P. Kumarasamy (26), and R. Mahendarajah (26). More than one hundred people were injured.

After all this 'blood-letting' the Government Media Centre quoting the Joint Operations Command gleefully proclaimed that "terrorist" hide-outs and bunkers were blasted by Security Forces.

The local telecast on Saturday night showed a documentary film on the "Nallur bombing", and the damage and the injured being taken to hospital and receiving treatment after the shelling on Saturday night.

(Courtesy of "Saturday Review", 14/3/87)

Historian Protests U.S. Military Aid to Lanka

LOS ANGELES – When it became his turn to testify before the House Foreign Affairs Sub-committee on Asian and Near Eastern Affairs during its hearings March 12 in the nation's capital, Indian historian and International Alert West Coast president Stanley Wolpert was the lone voice protesting against the military aid included in a proposed $33 million allocation package earmarked for Sri Lanka.

A majority of the appropriations would go into the funding of Sri Lanka's water projects and the development of better food growing techniques. "Those should certainly be continued," Wolpert conceded in an exclusive interview with India-West two days later. "The only item that was indicative of or was in any way associated with military assistance was $160,000, which was earmarked for training of military officers and possibly the police. **That I urged very strongly should be stricken as an indication of our outrage at the violation of human rights which have occurred in Sri Lanka and which continue to occur as a result of extraordinary detention as well as the torture of prisoners.**"

In his testimony before the sub-committee, a copy of which was made available to this newspaper. Wolpert stated that "part of the police problem may be attributable to lack of 'professional training,' but for the United States at this point to contribute even $100,000 to help Sri Lanka's police would be to send a dangerously supportive message to a force whose recent behaviour merits the strongest international reprobation, rather than any token sign of approval," and added that it would be **"unconscionable for Congress to grant even a hundred dollars in added aid to support such unrestrained and insatiable institutions of violence."**

Wolpert, who was one of five private citizens testifying that day, recommended that "if Sri Lanka's government stubbornly refuses to test the viability of a ceasefire, continuing instead to pursue its martial illusion, ignoring (International Alert's) advice as well as recently reiterated warnings from New Delhi, then (the United States) should impose an immediate embargo on all shipments of arms to Sri Lanka, urging our friends and allies, primarily Pakistan, Israel and China, to stop training as well as arming Colombo's costly military machine."

The United States, he urged, "should strongly support India's constructive initiatives in mediating a long-term settlement to Sri Lanka's conflict through the devolution of provincial power to Tamil leadership in the North and East. Recent SAARC Summit negotiations in Bangalore, followed by ministerial talks in New Delhi and Colombo, have narrowed the gap between Colombo's government and the Tamil 'Tigers' (LTTE) who control Jaffna, to what now appears to be for the most part disagreement over the granting of a land corridor linking the Tamil provinces of the North to Batticaloa in the East."

At the conclusion of his testimony, Wolpert was followed by Robert Peck, deputy assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs and James Norris, deputy administrator for the Agency for International Development. Both men voiced the Reagan Administration's support for the full $33 million appropriations, "their argument being that the aid to the military would help to democratise the Sri Lankan military and police and make them better restrained in their treatment of prisoners," Wolpert intimated.

He also indicated that he came away with the impression that not all the members of the sub-committee, which is chaired by Stephen Solarz and includes California Congressman Mervin Dymally, were swayed by the arguments to hand over the full appropriations amount to Sri Lanka. "I think several members of the committee agreed that the military aid should be cut off entirely . . . (and) . . . I think that all the members of the committee agreed more attention should be paid to the violations of human rights in Sri Lanka.

Some of the committee members he spoke to later "seemed supportive of the idea of (a) stopping the fighting, and (b) doing whatever is possible to build Sri Lanka after a political settlement is reached, my idea being a mini-Marshall Plan which would bring in significant sums of aid from the world community as soon as a cease-fire has been agreed upon and a political settlement has been signed with the Tamils and especially the Tamil Tigers," he confided.

On the other hand, he did confess that the military aid had less than a 50–50 chance of being cut from the proposed allocations, but it nevertheless was his hope "that some reference would at least be included in some way or another to control the behaviour of both the military and the police and bring them under strict supervision and observation."

Courtesy of India – West, March 20, 1987

Record Arrests on Heroin Charges

OVER 4,500 PERSONS were arrested in 1986 in Sri Lanka on heroin related charges, according to official statistics. This represented more than fifty per cent of all arrests relating to criminal offences in Sri Lanka. Thirty-four of the arrested persons were foreigners. 189 Sri Lankans had also been arrrested abroad during 1986 on drug charges.

According to the Head of the Police Narcotics Bureau, in all 8,123 persons had been arrested on charges connected with drugs. They comprised 4,535 for heroin, 3,686 for cannabis (ganja), 84 for opium and 18 for hashish offences.

A person found guilty of possessing over two grams of heroin is liable to be sentenced to death, according to Sri Lankan drug laws. Already a Dutchman and a Pakistani have received death sentences.

THE UNHOLY ALLIANCE

THE FOUR-DAY visit to Sri Lanka, made by Junior Home Office Minister David Waddington recently, met with sceptical reactions from the Tamil community in Britain and has been viewed as new evidence of the evil and 'unholy alliance" between the Thatcher and Jayawardene governments.

The official and ostensible purpose for the minister's visit was to look at the operation of the British visa system in Colombo, but according to reports from Sri Lanka the Jayawardene government was determined to use the visit to reaffirm the minister's belief that Tamil refugees entering Britain are 'bogus' – as he stated recently in parliament – in the light of growing international criticism of the regime.

A Home Office spokesperson was unable to give details of the minister's itinerary in the island and gave little importance to the visit, but a report in *The Guardian* said that Waddington was to meet Jayawardene in the "lovely hill town of Nuwara Eliya set in the heart of the tea country" and then make a visit to the port city of Trincomalee and Vavuniya in the north.

Tamils in Britain agreed that the minister was unlikely to be taken to the Jaffna peninsula, the site of appalling government atrocities against the Tamil people, from which a great number of them have been forced to flee.

"Will Mr. Waddington go to Jaffna and see the damage and destruction carried out by the Jayawardene government and see the reason why so many Tamils have become refugees?" said Rajes Bala of the Tamil Women's League. "Will he go into the Jaffna hospital where government shelling killed patients, including small children, on March 30?"

Vairamuttu Varadakumar of the Tamil Refugee Action Group said that a visit to Jaffna on the part of David Waddington would be something which could be looked forward to if he had come back with a fair report. Sinnappu Maharasingam of the Tamil Action Committee (UK) sees the minister's visit as "hypocritical". "If the minister looks into the humanitarian question and examines the reason why 40,000 Tamils have become emigrés, all of them from the Jaffna peninsula, then there would be no question of him returning home still claiming that the Tamil refugees are 'bogus'."

He pointed out that the minister's visit comes at a time of great embarrassment for the Sri Lankan government. The United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) has recently identified Sri Lanka as a violator of those rights at a time when the British government are looking for a means to return Tamil refugees.

A spokesperson in London for the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE), the main liberation group, agreed that the Sri Lankan government is desperate to prove that Tamils returning to Sri Lanka will not be in jeopardy.

There is a rumour that the governnment is now proposing to keep returned Tamil refugees in camps in the 'trouble-free' south of the island until the troubles are over, he said. He suspected that this was one idea being discussed with Mr. Waddington and feared that he would return with such a 'guarantee' from the Sri Lankan authorities and therefore another excuse to return asylum seekers to the island.

Waddington's visit has been seen as further evidence of the willingness of the Thatcher government to collaborate with that of Jayawardene. The fact that he carries a Home Office rather than Foreign Office brief shows the extent to which this alliance has permeated the policies of the British government.

The Home Office's strict and inhumane attitude towards Tamil refugees forced some of them to strip to their underclothes at Heathrow airport in defence of their rights for political asylum and their very lives and the case of Viraj Mendis, a Sinhala Sri Lankan forced into sanctuary in a church in Manchester to save himself from deportation, are just two examples of this government's – and particularly David Waddington's – determination not to renege on the alliance on any humanitarian grounds.

Recent questions asked of Mrs. Thatcher in the House of Commons regarding the government's military co-operation with Sri Lanka and the role of British mercenaries supplied by the London and Channel Islands-based company, KMS, still remain unanswered.

There is irrefutable and growing evidence that KMS are acting as the 'unofficial' arm of British foreign policy on the island, just as Colonel Oliver North was playing a similar role in what is now known as the 'Irangate' affair in the United States of America.

Unfortunately David Waddington's visit can only be seen as a deepening and consolidation of this dangerous and immoral friendship.

(By courtesy of "Asian Times" April 24, 1987)

GENOCIDE

continued from page 4

such a threat to stability in a key regime, Waddington considers that training troops to commit genocide is 'perfectly reasonable'.

Britain and other Western powers don't just support the persecution of Tamils in far-away Sri Lanka. They have also imported the anti-Tamil pogrom, by victimising thousands of refugees trying to flee the island. After the Colombo bus station bombing, the *Times* commented that 'the Tamils have hitherto enjoyed generous international sympathy', but warned them that the West's patience was limited. This is an outstanding piece of hypocrisy, even by Wapping standards. Tamil refugees have been thrown into detention camps from West Germany to Britain. Thousands have been sent back to Sri Lanka, with a one-way ticket to torture and death. They will never be able to repay the 'generosity' of the Western states.

We reject all attempts to blame the suffering and strife in Sri Lanka on 'Tamil terrorism'.

The responsibility for the bloodshed rests with the Western-backed regime in Colombo. The only hope of ending the war is by taking a stand against the forces oppressing the Tamils. Our efforts in Britain should centre on exposing and opposing the Tories' complicity in the campaign of genocide. The immediate priority is to defend Tamil refugees against David Waddington and the other British witch-hunters, who want to send them back to face SAS-trained death squads on the blood-stained island of Sri Lanka.

ANDY CLARKSON

(Courtesy "The Next Step" 1 May 1987)

ANURA Says It!

The following is an extract from a recent speech by Mr. Anura Bandaranaike, Leader of the Opposition, in the Sri Lanka Parliament:

Mr. Anura Bandaranaike: Now, Mr. Speaker, who was responsible, to start with, for creating this ethnic problem? Let us not start from 1948 or 1932. Let us talk from 1977. During the DDC elections that were held in Jaffna, Sir, in 1981 or 1982 you all proved to the Tamil people that democracy was not a viable alternative open to them. You lifted the ballot boxes because certain Ministers came and told your hierarchy in Colombo that, in fact, the TULF could be defeated in Jaffna. Under that misguided conception, some of your key Ministers went to Jaffna, unleashed JSS thugs on innocent Tamils and lifted ballot boxes. In fact, two ballot boxes were found in the Subhas Hotel. This was unprecedented in this so-called democracy. Ferdinand Marcos did not do it in the Philippines.

Then you arrested Mr. Amirthalingam who was then Leader of the Opposition. He phoned me at 2 in the morning. You also arrested Mr. Sivasithamparam, then Member for Nallur, and also, I believe, the then Member for Jaffna, Mr. Yogeswaran. They were all former Members of Parliament ... (expunged-vide order by the Chair.).

Mr. Speaker: Order please. Those words will be expunged from the HANSARD.

Mr. Anura Bandaranaike: But that is my personal belief. Surely as a Member of Parliament I am entitled to my personal beliefs. No order from the Chair can wipe them out.

Mr. Speaker: There is a thing called decorum even from the Opposition as well as the Government. You must observe them.

Mr. Anura Bandaranaike: I will certainly observe decorum of Parliament and accept your ruling, but that does not mean that I have reversed my beliefs. No order from any Court or Chair can reverse that.

Anyway, the Jaffna Library was burnt. The Tamils felt that there was absolutely no viable democratic alternative available to them. Then you brought in the Sixth Amendment. I do not want to comment on that. I have commented enough on that. The entire lot of Tamil Members of Parliament were driven out of this House. Now when you are talking about the ethnic problem, you continue to ignore this point.

Sri Lankan Crisis: Constitutional and Political Options

Statement of

A. J. WILSON

Professor of Political Science
University of New Brunswick, Canada

Before the Hearings on Sri Lanka on March 12, 1987, by the Sub-Committee on Asian and Pacific Affairs, Committee on Foreign Affairs, Congress of the United States.

I WISH to place certain facts at your disposal which I had witnessed as an insider in Sri Lanka's politics for the last forty years. I am also the son-in-law of the leader of what was originally the leading Tamil political party in the Ceylon Tamil areas of North and East Sri Lanka, the Tamil Federal Party, which later became the principal component of the Tamil United Liberation Front. S. J. V. Chelvanayakam was the founder-leader of the Tamil Federal Party from its inception in 1949 till his decease in 1977. I am now Professor of Political Science at the University of New Brunswick. Earlier I was also Chairman of the Department for four elected terms from 1972 to 30 June, 1986. I ceased in 1986 when I chose to take my sabbatical leave.

Previously I taught at the University of Ceylon (later changed to the University of Peradeniya) from 1952 to 1972. I was the first occupant of the founding chair of Political Science, which is the only chair in all the universities in Sri Lanka, as from 1968. For a short spell I functioned as Chairman of the Department of Economics and Political Science. Most importantly, I was the accepted intermediary in the dispute between the Tamil United Liberation Front and President Junius Jayawardene during the years 1978–1983 when I travelled from Canada during the long summer vacations to do my share in working out a compromise solution between the two parties. From my reading of the situation, the Tamil Front was honest and principled in all the commitments they made to President Jayawardene. They even agreed to President Jayawardene's request not to put forward a Tamil candidate at the Presidential election of October 1982. They expected President Jayawardene to deliver on his promises only to learn too late that he had been taking them for a long ride and had never intended to honour his pledges. President Jayawardene proved to be a man who had the utmost contempt for moral principles. He would have put Machiavelli to shame.

I have provided all this background information to indicate to you that I am quite competent and knowledgeable on Sri Lanka so that you will pay heed to the suggestions I shall be making below. For purposes of convenience, I shall enumerate these for you.

1. Politically the situation in Sri Lanka is both fluid and highly explosive. Repression may for a while maintain the peace and quiet of the graveyard. But there will be a repetition of the Shah, Marcos, Duvalier, Chiang Kai-Shek and those of their kind. President Jayawardene belongs to the same genre. Besides, his age does not permit him to crack the whip whenever necessary. From ministers down to the humblest public servant, everybody knows that he is a lame duck President who has barely 18 or 19 months to go and that the succession lies elsewhere. It will not necessarily be Lalith Athulathmudali who will succeed. Neither the public nor the officer class trusts him. The "dark horse" in American politics is an appropriate application to the confused situation in Sri Lanka.

2. To prove my point that the political situation is completely confused, two persons of importance at least have fled the country:

a) Sri Lanka's former Ambassador in Washington, Ernest Corea, a close relative of President Junius Jayawardene and to all intents and purposes his Minister for Foreign Affairs even though A. C. S. Hameed kept in name the title, has chosen to leave his post. When I inquired of him (Ernest Corea) the reason for his sudden decision, he stated that the present incumbent (President Jayawardene) will remain in office for only another two years and he would not like to serve under his successor. My own guess is that the incumbent will unsuccessfully obtain an extension but there will be a popular uprising as with the Shah and Marcos. Ernest Corea is intelligent enough to know the consequences for him. He maintained his landed immigrant status in Canada and is now special aide to Ivan Head, the President of the International Development Research Corporation in Canada.

b) Sri Lanka's Secretary of Plan Implementation, Wickrema Weerasooria has similar status in Australia. His sister is married to Gamini Dissanayake, one of the contenders for the presidental succession. Wickrema Weerasooria was my student at the University of Ceylon. He had told me that if he found the political situation in Sri Lanka becoming intolerable, he would flee to Australia. To my amazement he has done exactly this. Today he is Sri Lanka's High Commissioner in Australia.

c) The military officers in charge of operations in North Sri Lanka have indicated to visiting foreign journalists and foreign academics that the most they (the military) could do is to contain the insurgent situation. They are convinced that despite the surfeit of weaponry and the training provided by foreign military advisors (Israeli and Pakistan) and the mercenaries employed (British and American), their troops do not have the will to fight. Their emphasis is on the political solution which is fast becoming a mirage. The mirage is due to the deep divisions within the cabinet. The President and the Prime Minister are openly at odds. The ministers take sides. Most of them have no confidence in a President who has no confidence in them, having earlier demanded and obtained undated letters of resignation of all members of Parliament belonging to the ruling party.

d) To add to the confusion, the Commissioner of Elections in his report to Parliament has underscored the fact that the referendum to extend the term of Parliament was conducted in manners which were illegal and unconstitutional. In effect the Commissioner of Elections has virtually accused the government of cheating at the referendum in order to secure an extension of Parliament's term by another six years. This kind of activity on the part of a friend and ally of the United States will not promote the latter's interests, long term or even short term. The situation is reaching proportions similar to those under Ferdinand Marcos. There will sooner than later be a popular uprising which will sweep away President Jayawardene and his government. Under such circumstances, the best courses that might be adopted are:

i. The suspension of all aid to Sri Lanka until proper constitutional government is restored.

ii. The Aid Ceylon Consortium should also be advised to avoid good money chasing after bad money. The United States cannot be expected to impose a democratic order on Sri Lanka. But suspension of support can compel the Jayawardene government to reform itself, if not for its own sake, at least for the sake of those of its allies who have provided it with sustenance during the past years.

iii. The United States should be aware of the problems that will result when Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike becomes Executive President of Sri Lanka. Mrs. Bandaranaike will obtain the office in the event of (a) a free and fair election or (b) as a result of a popular uprising as in the Philippines. The foreign policy of Mrs. Bandaranaike will definitely be distanced from the West. The U.S. facilities in Sri Lanka will be terminated. The U.S. will then have to prepare itself for alternative ways of achieving its foreign policy objectives.

iv. This is where the Tamil problem in Sri Lanka poses a significant question. There are a number of ways in which the Tamil problem can be handled by the major powers without the problem being neglected and become a further load on the international system:

a. The military solution that the Sri Lanka government seeks has to be ruled out despite Israeli and Pakistani assistance. For this the culture of Sinhalese society should be comprehended. As we have suggested the military itself realises that a military solution is out of the question. The Sinhalese soldier, usually the son of peasants and/or rural folk does not realise the implications of going to the battlefront despite all the incentives offered. The notion dies hard that soldiery is another term for policing and maintaining law and order. The peasant soldier does not realise that he will be engaged in an actual war. For another, armaments and the trade in it have become a source of income for ministers in the Jayawardene government as well as for top level bureaucrats. What in fact is happening is that weaponry from the United States, Israel, Pakistan and other friendly powers is being traded with the Tamil guerilla movement. The situation is on a parallel with Chiang Kai-Shek and his officers. Military support is therefore counter-productive, if not definitely hostile to U.S. interests.

b. Given this state of affairs, the U.S. has still a few options available to it. The Jayawardene government will eventually be overthrown by a combination of student protest, labour unrest and ethnic rebellion. If ethnic rebellion is stilled, the Jayawardene government will have to handle a less onerous task in dealing with students and labour with whom compromises and settlements are more likely to work. The Tamil rebellion on the other hand will provide a catalyst for the other forces of protest. It will also bring about the economic ruin of the country in that tourism, foreign investments and exploitation of the free trade zone will cease to attract foreign interests.

The most pressing problem is to recognise the fact that the Tamils of Sri Lanka, and they include the Indian Tamil Plantation workers, occupy a geographically contiguous area and have, unlike in the early days of independence, begun to look upon themselves as a nation in their own right. This contiguous area which comprises the Northern, Eastern and Uva provinces should be constitutionally recognised as a single Tamil unit. Powers that do *not include* foreign affairs, defence, currency and communication should be devolved on this unit. Constitutionally, the central government should not have the right to withdraw any of the powers devolved without the consent of the Tamil unit. Any other formula for the amendment of powers will easily pass through the Legislature and will be meaningless because the Sinhalese constitute 74 per cent of the population.

A. The quantum of powers and the areas in which powers are to be devolved are subjects for negotiation. *But the two questions that are non-negotiable if the territorial integrity of the island state is to be maintained are (a) the one unit Tamil homeland and (b) the one unit Tamil homeland must have complete control over its demographic composition.* If the Sinhala Rata (the Sinhalese state) complains of the voluntary immigration of Tamils into the Sinhala Rata, unaided and by their own efforts, the alternative must be a peaceful exchange of population as, for example, happened in post-war Germany.

B. The alternative proposition will in my opinion prove more attractive. The traditional Tamil areas of the Northern, Eastern and Uva provinces should constitute one unit. They could have a sovereignty-type relationship with the Sinhala Rata. That Sinhalese state could be completely unshackled in whatever it wants to do in regard to the preservation of the land, the Sinhala race and the Buddhist faith. Each unit will have complete and unconditional control over defence, foreign affairs and land. Other subjects can be negotiated upon. The fact of a sovereignty-association relationship will at least maintain the island as one single polity on the map of the globe.

C. A confederal structure whereby the powers referred to in the preceding paragraph are an alternative to sovereignty association.

D. A federal system of government where there will be the non-negotiable one-Tamil unit and unconditional control over its demographic composition is still a possibility. I must caution however that in historical perspective the end result will be what has been cited in A or B or C or two separate sovereign units.

E. The advantage in the United States supporting propositions A, B or C is that the Tamil unit is more reliable in its adherence to the rules of the international diplomatic system than the Sinhalese unit. There has been a long tradition of education through American mission in the Tamil unit. The Tamil people feel morally obliged to the U.S. institutions which spent so much time over their education. Any agreement therefore with the U.S. government will be honoured. It will therefore be a sounder proposition for the U.S. to have broadcasting arrangements and other necessary facilities in the Tamil state than in the Sinhalese where public opinion is subject to violent, volatile and unpredictable changes of mood. A typical example was the abandonment by the Sinhalese government in 1956 of a defence agreement, hardly 8 years after it had been concluded, with the British government. The Sinhalese government has also proved thoroughly unreliable in recent times in its foreign policy towards the foreign powers which supported it. It has openly declared its support for the P.L.O. and the Arabs against the Israelis notwithstanding Israeli military support for Sri Lanka. It has condemned South Africa and supported sanctions against that country in spite of South African shipments of arms. All this has happened with the government of President Junius Jayawardene in office. The situation will be completely altered when Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike becomes President and will have the fullest backing of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc.

F. The difficulties that the Jayawardene government claims over the constitution it framed only six years after Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike framed hers in 1972 are lame and deceptive. Parliament in Sri Lanka has a five-sixths majority of the ruling party. Any constitutional expert will state that all that Parliament has to do is declare itself a Constituent Assembly in the context of a national crisis. This Assembly can abandon the referendal clauses in the Constitution, establish a separate Constitutional Court like Mrs. Bandaranaike's government did and amend the Constitution suitably to meet the problems of the national crisis caused by the Tamil demand. The judges and public servants can then be re-appointed and asked to take their oaths under the new constitution. These were the procedures followed by Mrs. Bandaranaike in 1972 and President Jayawardene in 1978. The excuse of constitutional obstacles therefore is a lame one. It is a fraudulent excuse.

G. Finally India has played out its mediatory role. It tried bringing the disputants to the negotiating table to come to an agreement from the time of the holocaust in July 1983 to the present time. India has sadly failed in her diplomacy. Sri Lanka should not be allowed to become yet another theatre of war in which the super powers will fight a war by proxy. Washington and the Aid Ceylon Consortium can coerce the Jayawardene government to revise the constitution on the lines stated. In this way the Indian Ocean can be preserved as a zone of peace.

Statement Before The Human Rights Commission

UNITED KINGDOM

We are concerned by the situation in Sri Lanka. We have consistently pressed on all those concerned the need for a political rather than a military solution to the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. We will continue to do so.

Only an end to the conflict and a peaceful negotiated settlement which takes into account the needs and wishes of all communities can end human rights abuses. We will continue to urge on the Sri Lankan Government the urgent need to take firm action to prevent human rights abuses by the security forces; we continue to deplore the atrocities committed by Tamil terrorist organisations.

Strategy Behind The Military Offensive

What precisely is the nature of the Sri Lankan military offensive against the Tamils? What is the strategic thinking behind it? What is the toll it has taken of innocent civilians? How have the militants, the LTTE armed fighters, fared? Finally, how far will the military offensive go and what lies ahead? A. S. BALASINGHAM, Political Adviser to the LTTE, offers a detailed participant analysis that addresses these questions.

BY IMPOSING an economic blockade on the Jaffna peninsula on January 2 and by launching a major military offensive in the North on February 6, Sri Lanka has deliberately thwarted the peace process mediated by India and embarked on a genocidal war against the people of Tamil Eelam. It is now clear that the Jayawardene regime has no sincere intention to resolve the conflict by peaceful negotiations, but is rather bent on a murderous military path aimed at the destruction of the Tamil freedom movement. The strategy of this economic and military offensive is very obvious – to strangulate and subjugate the Tamil nation and force the Tamils to surrender to Sri Lanka's terms and conditions. In other words, it is a strategy of military conquest, of military aggression and domination of the Tamil homeland. This strategy entails an all-out confrontation and liquidation of the LTTE – the vanguard movement of the Tamil resistance.

The Sri Lankan Government is well aware that the armed resistance campaign of the LTTE is the vital bargaining power of the Tamils and once that is weakened or destroyed, the Tamils would lose their only leverage. Thereafter, Sri Lanka could impose a solution on its own terms and conditions from a position of military superiority.

Has Sri Lanka achieved the aims and objectives of this strategy? What are the consequences of this purely militaristic approach ? Let us analyse this strategy in more detail.

Economic blockade

First of all, let us take the economic blockade, which was imposed in early January and continues. Sri Lanka maintained that the economic blockade was imposed to prevent the LTTE from taking over civil administration in the (Jaffna) peninsula and declaring unilateral independence. But the real intention was to impress upon the Jaffna population their economic dependence on the South and to punish them severely for their overwhelming support to the LTTE. Another reason behind the banning of fuel supplies is paralysing the vehicle mobility of the guerillas in the event of a war that, in Sri Lanka's calculation, will undermine the ability of LTTE's resistance.

Whatever the calculation that Sri Lanka may have, this inhuman action of deliberately starving a section of the population whom Sri Lanka shamelessly calls its citizens has earned international sympathy for our people. Although the economic blockade has caused immense suffering to our people, the Jaffna population has turned bitterly against the Government rather than resenting the LTTE and has been determined to face the challenge. If Sri Lanka had hoped that the economic strangulation would break the will of the people and force them to give up their struggle, then the strategy has miserably failed on this score.

The argument that the economic blockade was imposed in retaliation against LTTE's plans to take over civil administration is also not impressive. The LTTE has, over the last two years, built up an administrative infrastructure to maintain civil order since the state administrative structure collapsed. We were compelled to fill the vacuum created by the absence of state authority in the peninsula; otherwise anarchy and social disintegration would prevail. The fact that the writ of the Government did not run in the North was announced by Mr. Jayawardene himself; more than a year ago he confirmed that the State has lost its grip over this area. Furthermore, the LTTE has announced that it had no intention of declaring unilateral independence. Therefore, the retaliation theory advanced by Sri Lanka to justify its inhuman and unjust action is unteniable and unconvincing.

Such action has further alienated the Tamils from the state and made them realise that the racist Sinhala leadership is after Tamil blood rather than interested in peace and co-existence. Sri Lanka has thus created the conditions for the reinforcement of the spirit of freedom among the Tamils and hardened their will to struggle for political and economic independence.

Now let us see the consequences of the military offensive.

Before embarking on a major offensive in the North, Sri Lanka launched a massive strike in the Batticaloa district. The main target was the LTTE base at Kokkatticholai.

On January 28, a formidable force of 1,000 commandos of the Pakistan trained Special Task Force (STF) drawn from various camps in Batticaloa district (Thoonadi, Vellaveli, Kallady, Kaluvanchikudi, Karadiyanaru and Vavunaitivu) launched a massive assault on the LTTE base camp at Kokkatticholai. The advancing column ran into our landmine field and a South African-made armoured personnel carrier was blasted to pieces killing nine police commandos. In the ensuing battle, our guerilla fighters put up fierce resistance and 50 more commandos were killed. Faced with a formidable force superior in number and firepower, our fighters took to the diversionary guerilla tactics of abandoning the temporary base and consolidating the position elsewhere. It should be noted that in the four days of battle, the LTTE did not lose a single fighter, which is a remarkable feat in the context of the adverse situation we faced.

The STF commandos, having suffered heavy casualties and having found an abandoned base, wreaked their vengeance on innocent civilians. They went on a wild rampage shooting indiscriminately at the civilians on sight and left a trail of arson,

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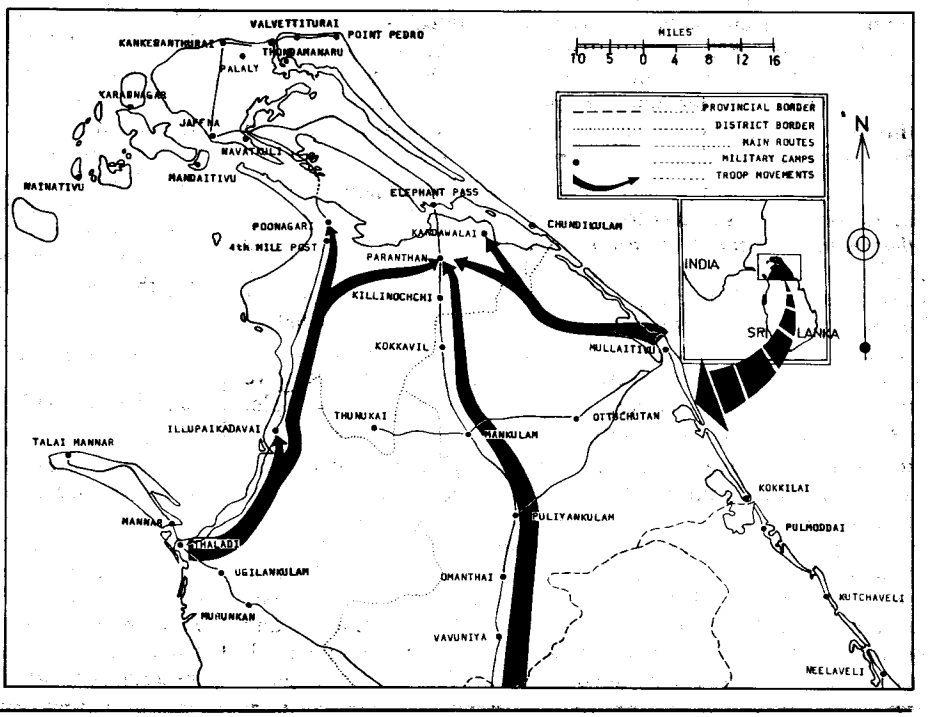

looting and rape. It was a massacre in cold blood and 220 civilians perished in the senseless, brutal rampage.

Has Sri Lanka achieved its military objective in the assault at Kokkatticholai? The answer is in the negative. In military terms, while the commandos suffered heavy casualties, the LTTE guerilla unit stationed at the base, having offered stiff resistance, left the area unscathed. We acted in accordance with the logic of mobile guerilla warefare. At Kokkatticholai and the surrounding villages, the military operation was directed against the Tamil civilians as the STF commandos have a notorious reputation for such racist assaults. What Sri Lanka achieved in this mad military adventure is the resentment and anger of the local Tamil population and an additional blood-stained record for serious violation of human rights. The military occupation of land is not the means to win the hearts of the people. The more the repression, the more will be the resistance. It is a tragedy that Sri Lanka has not learnt this historical lesson.

The offensive in the North has its negative consequences as far as Sri Lanka's overall politico-military strategy is concerned.

About 10,000 heavily armed troops with armoured vehicles and artillery pieces, with massive aerial support from fighter bombers and helicopter gunships, descended on the four mainland districts of Vavuniya, Mannar, Killinochchi and Mullaitivu on February 6. There are already 8,000 troops stationed in various army camps in the four districts, as indicated on the map. The immediate objective of the invading army was to advance towards Elephant Pass on a triple-trajectory path from Thalady (Mannar), Vavuniya and Mullaitivu and to encircle and destroy LTTE guerilla bases along the main route. On the North-Western sector, the army planned to march along the coastline towards Poonagari and then to branch off to Paranthan and Elephant Pass. In the North-Eastern flank, the troops were to advance towards Kandawalai and then branch off to Paranthan. In the central region, the troops assembled at Vavuniya from Anuradhapura were to advance along the main trunk road towards Paranthan and Elephant Pass.

Apart from encircling and destroying the LTTE bases along this projected thrust, the object of the strategy was to establish new army camps on strategic locations and to strengthen and consolidate the existing ones. Once these objectives were achieved in the mainland, an all-out offensive on the peninsula was planned.

This major offensive, code-named *Operation Giant Step* was to involve a combined force of 20,000 troops. With the induction of fresh troops in the recent period, the strength of the forces in the nine camps (including the naval base) in the peninsula has risen to 12,000 in number. About 8,000 troops were to launch an assault on the Jaffna peninsula from the mainland North through the Elephant Pass.

With this blueprint of a strategic offensive, thousands of Sri Lankan troops advanced along the main routes in three directions, penetrating across Mannar, Vavuniya, Mullaitivu and Killinochchi. Faced with formidable troop formations, with heavy firepower and aerial suport, LTTE regional guerilla units in the districts adopted diversionary tactics. Our guerillas shifted their bases inland in the jungles avoiding direct confrontation with the enemy forces. This was possible because of the geography of the area which is suited to mobile diversionary guerilla warfare. Along with the guerillas, vast sections of the civilian masses too fled to the jungles for safety. The invading military formations advanced without any form of resistance from the LTTE guerillas. The army marched past empty bases and abandoned posts.

The immediate objective of the offensive – to encircle and destroy guerilla bases – became a total fiasco. It was a serious disappointment to the force poised for battle. The Sri Lankan military commanders knew well that to pursue the guerillas into the jungle territory would be suicidal; and the troops were also not mobilised for prolonged jungle guerilla warfare.

The advancing columns attacked civilian targets all along their way. Civilians who took refuge in churches and temples were rounded up and massacred at Mannar and Killinochchi. Hundreds of civilians were taken as hostages and forced to march along with the troops as a human shield against land-mines. In a few days, the forces reached their destination, constructing camps and consolidating their positions along the main high roads. In the process, the troops fanned out, scattered, took to fixed positions in the new and old military camps.

Sri Lanka made jubilant claims that the army's objective of securing land was completely met in the Northern districts. This is far from the truth insofar as the ground reality is concerned. What has actually taken place is that the troops have moved into an alien guerilla territory and dispersed in fixed positions, exposing themselves as sitting ducks for the guerilla counter-offensive. LTTE guerillas, who took to strategic defence, are not in a hurry to launch a counter-offensive. They have time, initiative and a choice of targets. Trimmed and trained for protracted guerilla warfare, with perfect knowledge of the terrain, with the active support of the population, LTTE fighters are gearing themselves to a jungle war that will eventually reverse the balance in their favour. The strategic objective of the Sri Lankan army – "to clear up guerilla territory" – will not be a practical task as envisaged. Rather, the task of clearing up the army will become a practical possibility for the guerillas. The most important factor is that time is on the side of the LTTE fighters and Sri Lanka cannot afford a protracted jungle war.

Sri Lanka has not yet launched a major military invasion on the Jaffna peninsula as planned due to various compulsions; but it continues with limited offensive operations to harass LTTE guerillas and the local population.

On February 10, the fifth day of the offensive in the Northern districts, Sri Lankan troops moved out of the army camps at Palaly, Thondamannaru and Valvettiturai and engaged the LTTE guerillas in fierce combat. After heavy fighting which lasted for a day, the troops were forced to retreat to the barracks. On February 15, the Sri Lankan army opened a continuous barrage of heavy shelling with mortar and artillery from various camps in the peninsula. Heavy shelling from Jaffna Fort, Navatkuli, Palaly, Kankesanthurai and Valvettiturai continued for three days, causing severe casualties among the civilian population and damaging hundreds of houses. On the morning of February 26, troops moved out from the Kankesanthurai, Palaly and Navatkuli army camps and, having met with fierce resistance by the LTTE, returned to the barracks. Then again on February 28, heavily armed troops moved in strength from the Palaly army camp with massive aerial support and engaged the guerillas. Fierce fighting continued for 48 hours in the Vasavillan area. The villages of Kadduvan, Tellipalai, Malakam and Chunnakam suffered heavy aerial and artillery bombardment and thousands of people fled the area. LTTE fighters put up a courageous resistance and frustrated the efforts of the army to secure a bridgehead at Kadduvan. The troops finally withdrew after suffering heavy casualties. An armoured car was blasted and a helicopter was grounded in the fighting.

This is the regular pattern of the limited offensive taking place in the Jaffna peninsula – the strategic objective of which seems to be constant military harassment of the LTTE fighters and terrorisation of the population. **The Jaffna population, already subjected to extensive hardship, owing to the economic and communication blockade, is constantly faced with death and destruction by indiscriminate aerial and artillery shelling. By unleashing this barbarous form of collective punishment on a population simply because they supported the LTTE, Sri Lanka hopes to achieve a political settlement through tactics of terror.** Mr. Jayawardene is not even satisfied with the torrents of blood and tears already shed. He wants an all-out military invasion of the peninsula in callous disregard of the huge toll of civilian casualties that might result from the war.

Whether Sri Lanka will go for an all-out invasion of the Jaffna peninsula, with all its disastrous consequences, is a matter that will be known in the near future. There seems to be hesitation and indecisiveness in Colombo owing to uncertainty of the outcome. Yet one cannot rule out the possibility, since the

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MEDIA FILE

The Tragedy of Sri Lanka

IN LESS THAN two decades Sri Lanka has been transformed. The legendary isle of serenity has become the scene of one of the bloodiest communal conflicts of our time. This weeks killings in Trincomalee and Colombo and the reprisals that have already begun are but the latest and most gruesome reminder of how deep and bitter the ethnic division is on the island.

The Sri Lankan conflict has its roots in the sectarian differences between the island's majority Sinhalese and its minority Tamils. The Sinhalese, who are Buddhists, were the political successors to the British Raj at independence in 1948. At the time they adopted a "Sinhala-first" policy to rectify what they perceived as the Raj's historical preference for Hindu Tamils.

The promotion of Sinhalese interests, however, led directly to feelings of discrimination among the Tamils. The minority community, which had once dominated the civil service, the judiciary and the professions, now felt excluded from the mainstream of Sri Lanka's political life. The failure of Sinhalese Sri Lankans to find a way of stemming Tamil resentment led to the emergence of separate Tamil politics and later to guerrilla movements demanding Tamil independence.

This historical background may go some way towards explaining the tensions at the root of the continuing violence. But this weeks brutal killings of Sinhalese civilians must be no less abhorred for that. Even though the Tamil guerrilla groups – mindful of the adverse publicity such indiscriminate murders bring – have been quick to deny responsibility both for the Good Friday massacre and for Tuesday's bombs, precedent points unambiguously in their direction.

As a group, the Tamils have hitherto enjoyed generous international sympathy. Atrocities of this order, however, only damage their cause. They also provide the Sri Lankan government with a pretext for striking at Tamil camps in the north – so meeting violence with violence. If President Jayawardene now gives way to pressure from hardliners for a military solution, this can only lead to further conflict and ultimately to civil war.

The present upsurge in violence can be ended only by a political solution in which an attempt is made to resolve the long-standing bitterness between the two communities. One explanation for this weeks killings is that it signals once again the rejection by the Tamil guerrilla groups of a political settlement. Tamil political leaders must recognise, publicly, the self-defeating nature of such action.

So far there have been almost four years of fruitless negotiations between Tamil leaders and the Sri Lankan government. But the blame for failure does not lie entirely with the Tamils. President Jayawardene has prevaricated. He has offered concessions at one set of talks only to cast doubt on them or even withdraw them at the next. As a result, his own position has been weakened and so has that of the Indian government which has until now acted as mediator.

Now that regional mediation has patently failed, there is perhaps a chance in mediation from further afield. The Commonwealth Secretary General, Mr. Sonny Ramphal, might be a suitable figure to bring the two sides together for a fresh start. He is sufficiently detached from the conflict to be seen by both sides as neutral, while being suffficiently committed to a settlement, by virtue of his Commonwealth office, to engage in the long and painstaking negotiation that will be required.

The basis for a possible settlement may lie in President Jayawardene's so-called "December 19" proposals. These provided among other things, for Tamil areas to be given a degree of autonomy and for a division of the Eastern province to meet Tamil demands for greater participation in government.

The problem is that the President's commitment to these proposals has appeared to waver in recent months. At a new set of talks with a new mediator he would have an opportunity to renew his commitment. The Tamils, for their part, their cause weakened by this weeks barbaric killings, might be more open to a compromise along these lines than they were before. Today the outlook seems grim, but deep in the ashes of this week's tragedies may yet lie the seeds of eventual peace.

(Editorial, The Times, 23 April, 1987)

AN ISLAND BLASTED APART

A LITTLE OVER five months ago the government in Colombo was expressing delight at the extent of India's mediation towards a negotiated end to the long and bitter communal conflict between Sinhalese and Tamils. Two months ago President Jayawardene announced that he had asked the Indian government to underwrite any agreement reached with the Tamils. The implication was that India would not only underwrite but check and supervise the working of the semi-autonomous provincial councils offered to Tamils in the Northern and Eastern Provinces. Any such delicate arrangement, whch would have relieved India as well as Sri Lanka of the heavy burden placed on the island by Tamil separatism, has been blown to pieces by the bomb outrage in Colombo, killing upwards of 120 innocents and the massacre of bus passengers near Trincomalee on Friday.

Both the suspect organisations, the Tamil Tigers and the Eelam Revolutionary Organisation of Students, have denied responsibility for the bomb, but that denial does not exculpate Tamil militants in the eyes of either the government or the Sinhalese population. The air strikes yesterday against armed Tamil strongholds in the Jaffna peninsula, with inevitable loss of further innocent life, are easier to regret at a distance than to forgo in the heat of the atrocity.

Sri Lanka, inspite of the hopes earlier this year, still cannot find a way out of its desperate divisions thrust upon it undeserved. The Tamil Tigers, having defeated the groups more ameniable to compromise in a bout of fratricidal strife, demand nothing less than a separate state in the North and East. They deeply distrust – justifiably, from past experience – assurances by the government that promises will be kept and the two proposed councils will in fact be semi-autonomous, which is why India has been invited to act in a sense as guarantor.

Other constitutional solutions have been drawn up giving the strong Tamil areas a confederal status. However India, which because of its own large Tamil population in and around Madras is intimately involved in Sri Lanka's misfortunes, is rightly cautious about states built on communal or linguistic foundations. It has tried to persuade the separatists to settle for something less and in the process has risked further alienating support for Rajiv Gandhi's Congress Party in the Indian south. Yet its own mediation efforts have been hampered by the military and economic pressures piled on the Tamils, especially in Jaffna, in an effort to crush their movement for good. Several weeks ago India suspended its attempts at brokerage and has only recently resumed them. Of the thankless tasks in present-day communal diplomacy and there are many, Mr. Gandhi, his efforts answered by one atrocity upon another, has one of the worst.

If it comes to a confederal state, or an island divided like Cyprus or Ireland, that may be a less disastrous prospect than the intensified drift, sine die, into civil war. But semi-autonomy seems a more natural development, if the Sri Lankan and Indian governments can bring themselves to the long haul against the out-and-out separatists which it would entail. Not the least objection to placing the Northern and Eastern Province in a separate state is that there is no contiguous Tamil-speaking connection between the two, an argument which Mr. Gandhi has accepted. And the separate state would, of course, incorporate very large Muslim and Sinhalese minorities.

Sri Lanka is sometimes likened to Northern Ireland as a place where the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children and which outsiders can settle more easily in theory than inhabitants in practice. Except that the numerical scale of the conflict is much larger, the comparison has some validity, Mr. Gandhi cannot afford to wash his hands of it, but it is greatly to his credit that inspite of all the setbacks he still seems prepared to soak himself to the elbows.

(Editorial, The Guardian, 23 April, 1987)

Sinhala extremist JVP rises again?

THIRTY SEVEN Sri Lankan soldiers have been discharged for their alleged links with the proscribed Sinhala extremist organisation, the Janata Vimukti Peramuni, according to the Colombo-based *Sunday Observer* quoting a senior army official.

A "top level" investigation has been launched into reports that about 200 army and police personnel had sought membership of the JVP, which sponsored the 1971 insurgency in Sri Lanka when 57 police stations were attacked and 35 police divisions temporarily brought under the control of a rebel JVP "government".

The then Sirimavo Bandaranaike government crushed the insurgency with the help of foreign governments including India. Thousands of people, including police and army personnel, were killed. The recent reappearance of the JVP in the south was marked by the robbery of sophisticated weapons from an army camp near Kandy by elements suspected of having JVP links and incidents of private tax collections from villagers.

The Sunday *Weekend* quoted a senior defence official as saying that the "JVP and its splinter groups are not yet intent on resorting to organised violence as in 1971 ... they are engaged in the sister task of subverting the security forces". Security forces personnel, both officers and men, have in the past months received literature from the JVP and other groups, many of them at their home addresses.

Most of the material, according to *Weekend* is "highly inflammatory and anti-government and exhorted the forces to indulge in illegal acts".

By courtesy of "New Life" April 24, 1987

London Scene

Five Schools Entertain

The TMK Thiruvalluvar Tamil School of East Ham (London), The Institute of Tamil Culture of Tolworth (Surrey), London Tamil School of Wimbledon, The London Veena Music Group of Tooting and South London Tamil School, Croydon, *got together on Sunday, 12th April to provide a very enjoyable afternoon of singing, dancing and instrumental music to herald the Tamil New Year.*

The programme was held at the South Norwood Adult Education Centre, Croydon and hosted by the South London Tamil School in association with the British Association of Tamil Schools. There was also a vocal performance by the talented singer Sri. M. Yogeswaran who was accompanied by Sri. R. Balasri on the Miruthangam, Sri. M. Sivaraja on the Moharsing, Sri. M. Thevaraja on the Violin and Sri Vijay Kankutkar on the Tabla.

The Deputy Leader of the London Borough of Croydon, Cllr. David Congdon, congratulated Tamil parents on getting together to provide an education in Tamil language and culture which would in no way conflict with the education provided in English schools but would rather complement it and build on it.

KAVADI DANCERS

WEST LONDON TAMIL SCHOOL

was established in September 1978. Its main aim was to teach Tamil as a 'mother tongue language' to children of Tamil parentage, living mainly in the West London area. A large number of the children attending the school live in the Borough of Ealing.

The roll has grown from forty children in 1978 to 150 in 1987. The school conducts classes in Tamil language, Bharathanatyam *(classical South Indian Dance)*, vocal instrumental music *(veena, violin and miradangam)*. There is also a well-stocked library and facilities for computer studies.

West London Tamil School was delighted to participate in 'Ealing Education Week', sponsored by the Ealing Education Service of the London Borough of Ealing. The school organised an 'open day' on 4th April, at Stanhope Middle School, Greenford.

Visitors had the opportunity to observe Tamil language being taught in classes and to view projects undertaken by children. Demonstrations by children of dance, vocal and instrumental music were also staged. 'Software' developed to show and explain the nature of the Tamil language script was also shown on computer.

There was also on display an exhibition of a wide selection of books in Tamil, on various subjects ranging from prose and poetry, through to music and the arts. The day was rounded off by a cultural programme.

AUSTRALIA

As with torture the focus must be on activities at the national level. The working group recommended to CHR 42 that countries establish investigative commissions to look into cases of disappearances.

Against this background we welcome the positive step taken by the Government of Sri Lanka to set up an investigative commission to report on the increased level of disappearances. We trust that the commission will carry out its mandate as rigorously as possible given our concern about the increased incidence of disappear-ances in Sri Lanka in the report of the Special Rapporteur. Disappearances continue to take place against the background of a recent escalation in the armed conflict involving militant Tamil and Sri Lankan government forces. Australia deplores the resulting loss of life and infringement of basic human rights. It is to be hoped that the government of Sri Lanka will look with favour on requests by international humanitarian assistance organisations, such as the ICRC, for access to affected areas.

Australia also urges the Government of Sri Lanka to issue an early invitation to the working group on disappearances in order to further explore ways and means of reducing the occurrence of this unacceptable practice".

Venkateswaran asks Centre to protect Tamils

MR. A. P. VENKATESWARAN, former Foreign Secretary, has asked the Central Government to take urgent steps to stop the genocide against Tamils in Sri Lanka. Although he did not favour military intervention by India to solve the ethnic problem, he felt that India should take steps to help protect the Sri Lankan Tamils from the "murderous onslaught of the Sri Lankan armed forces".

He cautioned the Central Govern-ment that the ethnic problem in the island would have longstanding repercussions for India's security. In this context, he cited the role of mercenaries in Sri Lanka.

***"No consistency in foreign policy":** He said that the Indian foreign policy lacked consistency and credibility, as quick solutions and instant fixes were attempted. "Everything is still being sought to be done in fits and starts, leading to a general state of drift in the situation."*

He said that the Central Government was not as sensitive to the problems of the southern States as to those of the northern heartland. Had any linguistic group of north India been persecuted like the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the Central Government would have certainly reacted more decisively. Even the Tamil Nadu Government failed to express itself forcefully enough, because it happens to be an ally of the Congress (I). As a result, the problem was not being handled properly.

This indecision and haphazard approach by India has helped the Sri Lankan Government ignore the feelings of Tamils in India. He blamed the Government for removing Mr. G. Parthasarathy who had understood the problem.

He pointed out that atrocities perpetrated against the three million Tamils in Sri Lanka are a cause for serious concern to the Tamils everywhere.

By courtesy of "The Hindu" International, May 2, 1987

Strategy Behind The Offensive

continued from page 15

hawks in Colombo are capable of irrational political behaviour purely impelled by the instincts of racism. Whatever the decision may be, the LTTE fighting formations are alerted to resist to the last man. Mr. Jayawardene is sadly mistaken if he assumes that the military conquest of the peninsula is an easy task.

Sri Lanka has failed to achieve its politico-military objectives in the offensive operations in the North and East. As a consequence of this military gamble, it has contributed to the suspension of India's good offices and wrecked the peace process. It has earned the bitterness and anger of the Tamil population and made the LTTE guerillas more resolute and committed to fighting back.

The offensive operations have not affected the military structure of the LTTE, but has caused a heavy toll of Tamil civilian casualties. From January 28, the beginning of the offensive, till March 5, 504 innocent people have been killed in the North and East, 868 civilians have been arrested and 28 women have been raped aside from the monumental damage done to Tamil property.

This is certainly a massive military operation "against the Tamil civilians" – as the Indian Government has rightly told Sri Lanka. In this war, Sri Lanka has achieved nothing apart from letting its indisciplined band of military thugs engage in sadistic massacres. If Sri Lanka continues with this military option, it will further escalate the conflict and plunge the entire island into the abyss of civil war.

A.S. Balasingham,
Political Adviser to the LTTE

Courtesy of THE HINDU, International Edition, Week ending March 21, 1987

Travails Of The Uprooted

DHANAM N. SELLIAH stood outside her one-room shack in Mandapam, pouring mugfuls of water on her five-year-old son. Nearby, a woman sat blowing at a firewood stove, cooking the day's meal of rice and vegetables. Men and women loitered while children played on the sandy terrain, which was littered with refuse and debris. Barbed wire fences marched up the camp on three sides; the Bay of Bengal pounded on the other. Dotting the area were uniformed policemen.

The scene was the transit camp in Mandapam, which houses about 8,000 Sri Lankan Tamils, many of whom had fled the island when the first ethnic riots broke out in 1983. A tidal wave of refugees followed as the Sri Lankan armed forces unleashed a reign of terror in the northern part of the country. Of the 1.25 lakh Sri Lankan Tamils who fled to India, more than 25,000 ended up in refugee camps in Tamil Nadu.

The refugees in the Mandapam camp – the largest of the 70 camps for refugees – have a litany of woes: overcrowded camps, poor sanitation and inadequate health care.

Lack of jobs and living on the dole for two or three years have made many of the refugees depressed. Local people have been unsympathetic to the refugees' complaints. They accuse the refugees of not being grateful for the facilities provided by the Indian Government. All these problems have been forcing many of them to return to riot-torn Sri Lanka.

It is not apparent to a visitor that any of the refugees' problems is being addressed to. The most visible problem is inadequate and sub-standard housing. Families are crammed into 10' × 10' rooms in ageing tiled houses, which once served as quarantine camps for those going to Sri Lanka. For other families, corrugated aluminium sheds are what they have to call a home. The Tamil Nadu Government recently launched a programme to build more houses in the camp to accommodate the rising number of refugees transferred from other camps. Communal toilets dot the area. Residents of the adjoining Central Marine Fisheries Institute say that many of the refugees defecate along the institute's fence.

Health care is a major cause for concern among the refugees. They say that even though there is a dispensary in the camp and they can go to the Government Hospitals nearby, there is often a shortage of medicines and the doctors suggest that the patients buy them from private pharmacies. But that is often not within their reach. A family of five gets a monthly dole of Rs. 302.50 to meet all expenses. Much of this goes to buy the subsidised rations and fuel. Residents complain that even though rations are subsidised – rice is sold at 52 paise a kg (the Government says it is 27 paise) – the quality is often sub-standard. Most families live on a diet of rice and a small amount of vegetables. Few can afford fish or meat, which once constituted the bulk of their diet – most of the refugees used to be fishermen.

A study conducted by a team of doctors working among the refugees found that nutritional deficiency is the most common problem. All the women refugees examined were found to be anaemic. Children had sore tongue due to Vitamin B deficiency and often had angular stomatitis (angles of the mouth cracking). Many of them suffered from night blindness, spots in the eyes and skin changes due to Vitamin A deficiency. Infants take much longer than normal children to begin crawling or walking. For instance, if a healthy child usually starts to crawl at eight months, the children at the camp reach this stage much later. A doctor working among the refugees said that there were children more than a year-and-a-half-old, who were unable even to sit up.

Many refugees say that there is large-scale corruption among officials at the camp and that the families have to give 'something' to get anything done. They are appalled that the officials would prey on helpless people. Soon after they landed in India, the refugees say, Customs officials swiped half of their belongings. The rest were grabbed by police. Women say they are constantly harassed sexually by police and other officials. The Tamil Nadu Government and some social welfare agencies are running classes to train people in typewriting, tailoring and electrical work. But few jobs are available.

Viswanathan Selliah, 36, a Sri Lankan refugee living in Denmark and now on a short visit to Mandapam to try to arrange papers for his family, was bitter about the conditions at the camp. He said officials seemed to have the attitude that all the refugees needed was a little food and a place to stay. He contrasted this with the camps in Denmark, where the refugees are initially put up in hotels and transferred to houses. They are treated with respect by the officials and the citizenry and encouraged to work in the society. Most of the 1,500 Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in Denmark, he says, have been given five-year work permits. All of them are now learning Danish.

Hundreds of Sri Lankan Tamil refugees in Tamil Nadu, on the other hand, are heading home in boats, for which a person is charged Rs. 250 for the 45-km trip from Rameswaram to Talaimannar. So far, about 4,000 have left the Indian shores. Nearly all of them say that the conditions in Sri Lanka are improving despite sporadic incidents of violence. They feel that whatever be the problems in their country, they will be better off than in the refugee camp.

By courtesy of "The Hindu" April 25, 1987

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Some of the immediate problems these unfortunate refugees undergo daily are overcrowding and lack of privacy in camps, inadequate nutrition, insufficient clothes, lack of proper water supply, lack of medical care and exposure to various illnesses, no schooling facilities. These, needless to say, lead to most unpleasant social problems within camps. Some of these refugees, having lost everything in their homeland Tamil Eelam, want to go back and face death. Such is the condition, hardship and desperation in the camps.

TRO began its relief work in August 1985, in 2 small camps and expanded its work, slowly and steadfastly to 78 camps in 5 districts in just one year. There are at present a total of 176 camps in Tamil Nadu. Also our work is being carried out in Trincomalee, Mullaitivu, Vavuniya, Muthur and Jaffna under most difficult conditions.

In its first year TRO spent nearly 8 Lakhs of Indian Rupees. The main source of funds is the expatriate Tamil community in various parts of the Globe especially from Malaysia, the Middle East and Switzerland. We are also very grateful for the assistance provided by the Governments of India and Tamil Nadu State. Unfortunately this is not enough to meet even the basic needs of our badly affected people.

TRO has embarked on various programmes such as clothes distribution, providing temporary shelters to ease overcrowding, nursery care and teacher training, free medical care including immunisation and refugee health workers training, fair price shops providing goods at lower prices, job opportunities, nutritional food supplements, entertainment to kill boredom and various rehabilitation projects.

We seek your generous support and assistance in the form of donations and regular contributions however small they may be, as a matter of urgency and duty, to continue the good work of TRO and expand it to other needy areas. Also it would be most helpful if you could organise the necessary financial support to implement some of our projects effectively for the betterment of our suffering people. A receipt of acknowledgement will be provided from the TRO (U.K.). Also as a matter of obligation and information, TRO (U.K.) will provide you from time to time the nature and the progress of TRO's work in Tamil Nadu and Tamil Eelam. Whatever the political outcome may be, TRO's work will be a continuing one.

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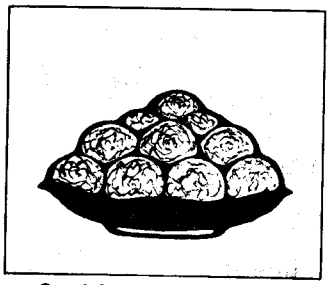
April 10, 1987

R. Navanayagam
Co-ordinator



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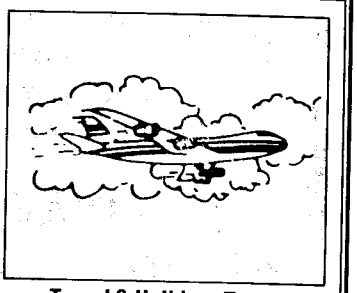

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GRADUATE CONSULTANT ENGINEER, age 26, from respectable Jaffna Hindu family, now British citizen, plans getting married within the next two years to a professional or student qualifying for professional career. Apply with horoscope. **Box M162,** *c/o Tamil Times.*

SISTER IN reasonably comfortable circumstances seeks partner for 38 year old graduate sister living in U.K. Please write. **Box M163,** *c/o Tamil Times.*

BROTHER SEEKS PARTNER around age 35, preferably professional, for sister Sri Lankan Tamil Catholic, U.K. Local Govt. employee. Please send details. **Box M164,** *c/o Tamil Times.*

WELL SETTLED AUNT in U.K. seeks for attractive 25 year old Jaffna Hindu B.A.Econ (Madras) graduate niece with Mars in the 7th House and presently in India a suitable partner. **Box M165,** *c/o Tamil Times.*

UNCLE SEEKS FOR Jaffna Tamil Hindu nephew 33 years U.K. citizen teetotaller holding highly paid post in reputable London firm. Mars in 1st House. Send horoscope with details. **Box M166,** *c/o Tamil Times.*

JAFFNA HINDU BROTHERS (Accountants – Canada) seek bridegroom aged 34–40 for their only sister (Accountant) now in Jaffna. Chart, relevant details in first instance please. **Box M167,** *c/o Tamil Times.*

JAFFNA HINDU ACCOUNTANT sister (Canada) seeks bridegroom aged 37–40 for her religious and homely lawyer sister now in Madras. Chart and relevant details in first letter please. **Box M168,** *c/o Tamil Times.*

HINDU PARENTS SEEK for their 25 year old son, employed abroad as an engineer, suitable marriage partner. Please send horoscope with full details. **Box M169,** *c/o Tamil Times.*

DOCTOR, TAMIL CATHOLIC, 49, Widower, no children, settled U.K., seeks suitable partner, 30-40. No bars. Please write with photo. **Box M170,** *c/o Tamil Times.*

BIRTH

PREMARAJAH. Daughter, Aruntha Jeevamalar, to Beulah and Prem, sister to Kavitha on 25.1.87, Morden, Surrey, U.K.

OBITUARIES

CHATCITHANANTHAM, Thamotherampillai (Retd. Central Bank), husband of Sivagamasunderi, father of Dr. Vivekananda (U.K.) and Kamalini. 53/1, Ramakrishna Road, Colombo.

CHELVARAJAH, Joseph Adams, husband of Pushpadevi Joseph, father of Pushparatna (Rajah), Pushparanee, Pushpananda (Bahrain) and Pushpakumar. 19/4 Menerigama Place, Nr. Lavinia.

RASASINGHAM, K. (Retd Railway), husband of late Thanalukshmi, father of Dr. Padmini (U.S.A.), Sri Ranjan (U.K.), Shanthini (U.S.A.) and Sri Tharan (U.S.A.). Apt. 15B, 160 North Main St., New York City, NY 10956, U.S.A.

CHELLIAH, Sivasothy, husband of late Ahilandam, father of Vallipuram, Muthucumaru (Kuwait), Balasubramaniam and Poologasingam. 618, Manipay Road, Jaffna.

PILLAI, S. T., husband of Nageswarie, father of Nirmalamoorthy, Krihnamoorthy (Riyadh), Sunderamoorthy and Vinayagamoorthy. 1117, Delupitiya Road, Hunupitiya, Wattala.

E. MANICKASINGAM, (Retd. PWD Overseer, Katugastota), died peacefully 8th March '87 in Boston, U.S.A. Beloved husband of Bhavani, father of Indrajit, Kumudini, Ruban, Ranjit and Jamuna, Father-in-law of Sahadevan. 94, Mt. Vernon St., Somerville, Mass 02145, U.S.A.

MUHANDIRAM, C. Muttucumaru J.P., who died recently in Trincomalee at the age of 82, was a leading figure in the District, a social and religious worker. He was employed by the British admiralty as Senior Executive Clerk and was affectionately known as 'Muttu' by Europeans and Asians alike. He was the father of the Co-operative movement in Trincomalee. He served as a C. W. E. Director for 14 years. His involvement in the Co-operative movement took him to places like Copenhagen, Kuala Lumpur, U.K. and China on delegations and for seminars. 96, Blandford Road, Beckenham, Kent.

BALASUBRAMANIAM, Ponnampalam, of Kadduvan, Tellippalai (of Eastern Bank, Colombo and later Commercial Bank, Jaffna). Husband of Buvaneswary and father of Balendra (U.K.), Balaramani and Buvanendra (Nigeria). Died on 26.3.87 in the U.K. Cremated at Putney Vale Crematorium. 39, Cavendish Road, New Malden, Surrey.

MAILAVAGANAM, A. W., (Professor Emeritus University of Colombo). Husband of late Pathmavathy and father of Nandakumar. 26, Police Park Avenue, Colombo-5.

RATNAVALE, Selvaratnam, Wife of Ratnavale, mother of Vadivale, Sothivale, Gnanavale, Jayarani, Kamalarani (London) Dr. (Mrs.) Pathmarani (London) and Vasantharani. Oorani, Valvettiturai.

HANDY, Kanmanie, Wife of Dr. G. R. Handy, mother of Sirikanthie, Laxman and George. 15 Guildford Crescent, Colombo-7.

JAYAKODY, Kandiah, Former M.P. for Udupiddy. Husband of Puwaneswary, father of Sivakumar, Thirukumar, Jayakumar, Sivapathakumar (all of Australia), Sriskandakumar, (London), Logeswary (Bahrain) and Samundeeswary. 32, Castle Lane, Colombo-4.

SIVASUBRAMANIAM, (Retd. RMLT – MRI) Husband of Sivanthi, father of Suresh, Prithiviraj, Mohanraj (Switzerland), Indrajith and Yasothara (Switzerland). 51, Chetty Street Lane, Nallur.

PANCHADCHARAM, C., Husband of Vijayadevi, father of Dr. Devarani (New Zealand), Devaraja (Dubai), Dr. Indirani, Selvarajan (Botswana), Sivarani (Botswana). M 3, Govt. Flats, Bambalapitiya.

RATNASINGHAM, Dr. K., Husband of Kamaleswary, father of Shanthi (England) Jayanthi, Sureshkumar and Dayanandakumar (England). 22, Siripura. Thalawathugoda, Pannipitiya.

RAMANATHAN, K. V., (Retd. Senior Supdt. of Police). Husband of Sivagamy, father of Sathyabhama, Dr. Ramachandiran, late Shanthakumari, Chandralekha and Ganga Devi. Funeral in Scotland. 48, Colombogam Road, Jaffna.

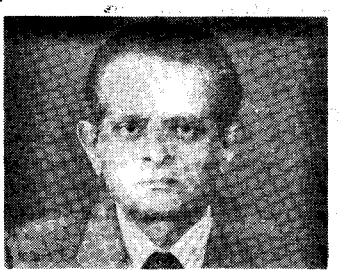
THURIAPPAH, C. J., husband of Chelvamany, father of Rajan (Dubai) and Asseer (Saudi). 48, Muhandirams Road, Kollupitiya, Colombo-3.

Malar Chinniah with Mary Barker at time of ordination in 1983

Rev. Malar Chinniah who died on April 13 was the first ordained woman minister of the Methodist Church of Sri Lanka. After teaching for several years at Vembadi she joined the Sisterhood of the Church serving first in Chenkaladi, later in Muthur, Jaffna and the Colombo City Mission. She leaves behind three sisters (two in Jaffna, one in Canada) and a brother in Sri Lanka.

31/4A, Sea Avenue, Colombo 3.

VELUPILLAI Vamadeva, husband of Jeyasothy (neé Duraisingham) and father of Anusha, Jeyapalan and Geetha. Passed away on Sunday, 5th April at his residence, 86 Eswyn Road, London SW17.



Vamadeva was a son of the late A. Velupillai, Government Surveyor and Mrs. Velupillai of Puloly East, Point Pedro. He also leaves behind three brothers, Dr. V. Krishnarajah (Surgeon, Jaffna), Mr. V. Balendra (Manager, Cement Corporation, K.K.S.) & Mr. V. Rajendra (Inspector of Branches, Peoples Bank) and two sisters Mrs. P. Rajasekeram Pillai (Canada) and Mrs. P. Parameswaran (Brunei).

Mr. Vamadeva had his education at Hartley College where he was Head Prefect and in the University of Peradeniya, from where he graduated with Honours in Economics and was President of the Students Union. He has represented Sri Lanka as its Trade Commissioner in many capitals of the world, most recently in London.

Personal

Bishop Gnanapragasam

NEWS has just reached us that Archdeacon J. J. Gnanapragasam of Colombo has been appointed the 12th Bishop of Colombo. His consecration will take place on May 28 at which the Rt. Rev. John Bickersteth, Bishop of Bath and Wells, will represent the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Ven. Gnanapragasam was Archdeacon of Jaffna prior to his appointment to a similar position in Colombo in 1978. He had his early education at Trinity College, Kandy and read History at Bishop's College, Calcutta. He was Vicar of St. James Church, Nallur for sometime.

We wish the new Bishop, the first Tamil to hold this exalted office in the Anglican Church, every success in the difficult and challenging task he is assuming. He succeeds Bishop Swithin Fernando who is retiring from the bishopric on reaching his 65th birthday.

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"MEENDUM RAMAYANAM, MEENDUM BHARATHAM"

Kalai Kuzhu (U.K.), Cultural Group *of Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam presented a very enjoyable programme at the Westminster Central Hall, London, SW1 on the 25th April.*

The evening's proceedings began with a Bharatha Natyam Recital by Ambihai Seevaratnam, till recently a student at the Kalakshetra, Madras. Songs sung during her performance were specially composed by the Tamil Poet, Kasianandan and the music by Sri Mathurai Sethuramanar.

The play was produced and directed by A. Tarcisius. Ravanan was ably portrayed by the corpulent S. Raj, and Seethai by the petite Thenuka Perinpanayagam. However, the most interesting and widely applauded performer item was Annaviyar, ably played by D. V. Palanivel. His characterisation of J. R. Jayawardene was absolutely brilliant.

GRADE I Examination Results

Conducted by the Associated Board of British Tamil Schools

The following students were examined in **TAMIL LANGUAGE** *and reached the standard required to obtain the grade denoted below. The children were presented for examination by West London Tamil School, South East London Tamil School, T. M. K. Thiruvalluvar Tamil School, Bharatha Vidya Bavan and privately by the parents.*

* * * *

DISTINCTION

Subadra Ambikapathi, Sujidra Ambikapathi, Anjali Balachanthiram, Logaprasanna Chandrakumar, Sujatha Gunasekaram, Venthan Jeyaratnam, Juliana Mary Kannen, Aathavan Loganayagam, Jeevan Manickavasagar, Vidya Manickavasagar, Anuja Manoharan, Tharany Nageleswaran, Vanathi Nithiananthan, Valli Niththyananthan, Angayarkanni Ramachandram, Arul Ramasamy, Bharathy Ramgopal, Giri Ramgopal, Shiamene Sangaralingam, Soruban Sarvananther, Chithra Satkunananthan, Malarmathi Sekaran, Sumathi Sekaran, Suganya Sivabalasingham, Parasakthy Suppiah, Shankar Vijayadeva, Sheila Vijayadeva, Habsa Zaffarullah.

* * * *

CREDIT

Dheepa Balasundaram, Asha Bose, Bruno Bose, Nila Jeyasingh, Senthooran Seenivasan, Sumathi Seevaratnam, Abarna Sarma, Thanusha Sivakumaran, Arivudainambi Murugiyan, Rajan Paramasivam, Mitchelle Phillip, Sampath Pothiraju, Rathini Rajanayagam, Mangai Ramachandran, Atheetha Sivanandan, Dharshini Srinivasan, Uma Suppiah, Kavitha Thevarajah, Narash Vanniyasingham, Ganesh Veerappan.

* * * *

PASS

Thayalan Balachanthiran, Shankar Shanmugarajah, Karan Phillip, Priyanthi Sothiratnam.

HE'S KING OF THE CASTLE

World Junior Chess Champion,

DHARSHAN KUMARAN

contemplates his next move. Dharshan, 11, son of Dr. O. Kumaran and Dr. (Mrs.) Kumaran of Littleton Crescent, Sudbury, clinched the World Under-12 Championship in Puerto Rico last year.

A Night to Remember

THE LEAGUE OF FRIENDS of the University of Jaffna put on a show which was both unique and scintillating. Shenika Shakespeare and her Guru Venkatachalapathy (former lecturer at Kalakshetra) performed together on the stage at Copland High School, Wembley some exquisite dances, both Kuchipudi and Bharatha Natyam before a very appreciative audience of 400.

The pleasure was not only in hearing the stirring music and watching the skilful movements but also in seeing the bridging of the world famous Madras Institute and the less pretentious West London Tamil School where Shenika took her first steps in Indian dancing. The performance was compered by Nasareen Farqui most ably despite occasional difficulties in pronouncing Tamil names and words.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF MUSIC

and dance was enjoyably demonstrated recently (April 5th) *at the Lola Jones Hall in Tooting*

To a capacity audience, which included the Mayor and Mayoress of Wandsworth Councillor Alf and Marie Jessiman and the Member of Parliament for Tooting, Mr. Tom Cox, the London Veena Music Group staged a grand variety entertainment.

The orchestra has many nationalities to emphasise peace and racial harmony which music expounds.

The Mayor and the M.P. in short speeches, both commented on the very mixed performers and drew attention to the enthusiastic response of the audience of many nationalities.

The London Veena Orchestra led by ARUNTHATY SRIKANTHA RAJAH.

SURBITON TAMILS CLUB

a Sports and Social Club staged a cultural evening on 11th April to celebrate the Tamil New Year

Nearly 350 people were present and enjoyed the variety entertainment of a Veena Orchestra by students of Brindha Jeganathan, Bharatha Natyam by students of Subathra Sivadasan, singing by Renuka Kanagasabai, Drama and Kathakaladchepam by members of S.T.C.

The very first performance in this country by Renuka Kanagasabai, a talented vocalist and the drama by the young members of the club were well received by the audience as were the other performances by the experienced artistes.

THE BULLY AND THE BOMB

THE Bully Boy tactics that the Sri Lankan Government have been adopting against the Tamils for the past 30 years, are being demonstrated now, more forcefully than ever before. All the King's horses and all the King's men are involved in the exercise.

On the 21st evening around 5pm the massive bomb that exploded in the heart of Colombo became straightaway linked to the Good Friday ambush in which service personnel returning to their barracks after their New Year vacation were said to have been the main casualties. However, the time and place chosen for an explosion of this nature could earn nothing but outright condemnation from all responsible quarters, whoever the perpetrators and however legitimate their cause or grievance. To plant a device of this nature at a place calculated to harm none but innocent civilians is certainly an act of terrorism that no responsible liberation movement would like to associate itself with.

How or why this bomb was planted no one seems certain. Less so the Sri Lankan authorities who despite the stringent security measures adopted within the precincts of Colombo, find themselves trotting out unconvincing explanations and guesses. But somehow the authorities had straightaway come to the conclusion that it was one or the other of the two liberation movements (since it is common knowledge that only two of them actively operate at present). Within hours of the blast the Service Chiefs had been summoned and as the decision to impose a curfew was being made, it is clear from the sequence of events that the decision to wreak revenge on the Tamils and this time by the State itself had been taken the same night. Accordingly Jaffna, the heartland of the Sri Lankan Tamils, was being bombed from the early hours of the morning of the 22nd, even before they had learnt of the blast that rocked the City of Colombo.

The air strike on Jaffna is thus a premeditated act of revenge, sudden and cold-blooded against a defenceless population. The full fury of a State has been let loose on people economically strangled and whose freedom of movement and ordinary way of life had been severely restricted by the continuing presence of troops and army camps at every turn. No doubt the Tamils of the North and East have for some time now been used to air attacks. Said to be aimed at the Militants they invariably resulted in schools, hospitals, churches and temples being indiscriminately damaged and destroyed. All this in the name of hunting a "handful of terrorists". Over 60 army encampments and nearly 20,000 troops are employed in an exercise which one could describe as searching for a needle in a haystack. When the Sri Lankan infantry finds it so hard to aim at a terrorist and invariably shoots a civilian instead, their difficulty from the air becomes all the more understandable. But what beats understanding is the decision to spot the culprits of the Pettah Bomb blast from the air and in the Jaffna peninsula! Why the East, equally suspect, should have been excluded from this operation is anybody's guess. Why the Tamil Militants should have been the only suspects and whether they could not have been found nearer Colombo, only JR in his profound political wisdom can tell.

What infuriates public opinion however, is the intemperate reaction to an uninvestigated disaster however calamitous, a hot-headed and seemingly illogical decision, emanating from the highest echelons of the Sri Lankan Government to cause havoc and disaster to another section of their own countrymen, purely because they are Tamils or that they dared to defy their dictates. Such brazen effrontery perpetrated against the Tamils is a crime against international law and indecent by any standard of humanitarian conduct.

Ever since 1956 Sinhalese hoodlums were let loose on the Tamils in the Sinhala-dominated areas whenever they raised their voice in protest against discrimination or oppression. They were systematically looted, plundered and humiliated in 1956, 1958, 1966, 1971, 1978 and 1981.

Came July 1983 and the Tamils have said "Enough is enough".

Now the Sri Lankan Tamil community is fully aware the Sri Lankan State represents the Sinhalese and none else and has further assumed the ignominous role of acting the Goon, a stance even the more responsible men of honour in the majority community (and there are so many) will so quickly disown.

Bully boy antics are not the stuff that good governments are made of. Nor can they work against the steely determination of a community, however small, fighting for its very survival. But they do understand that **the Sri Lankan Government does not have the moral calibre to represent them anymore. It has forfeited any right it might have had to determine the future of the Tamils in the island.**

K.R.

Dirty Tricks Work of Sri Lankan Government?

The recent bus killings in Habarana and the Colombo bomb blast point an accusing finger at the Sri Lankan Government.

Firstly, how can 40 to 50 fully-armed men disappear into thin air in an area full of security personnel and army camps. The Government-controlled media created mischief by giving the impression that only Sinhalese were killed but recent investigations reveal that at least 8 Tamil bus passengers also died in the incident.

Was it the work of a section of the security forces to enable the Government to cling to power?

Secondly, the speed with which the President of Sri Lanka announced the postponement of General Elections also appears very suspicious. All indications point to a very large bomb which would have been impossible for a small group to plant in an area full of Government troops.

The same cynical Sri Lankan Cabinet and Government who organised and manipulated the anti-Tamil killings in July 1983 are up to their dirty tricks again, to cling to power without free, democratic elections. Power at any cost seems to be their motive.

Colombo Correspondent

ZIA GIVES $1 million in arms to Lanka

PAKISTAN PLEDGED continued support for Colombo's efforts to "maintain its independence and sovereignty" as visiting Sri Lankan prime minister Ranasinghe Premadesa concluded his talks in Islamabad.

A foreign office spokesman said defence equipment worth about one million dollars had been supplied to Sri Lanka. But he denied reports that about 300 Sri Lankan army personnel were undergoing short courses in counter-insurgency conducted by Pakistani instructors. Only some places had been set aside in Pakistani military institutes for Sri Lankans as for nationals of some other countries, he said.

Premadesa told reporters before leaving for Lahore that his visit would go a long way in further strengthening the friendly relations and co-operation between the two countries.

At a dinner the previous night, Gen. Zia ul-Haq, expressed the hope that Sri Lanka would soon overcome her internal difficulties. The Sri Lankan prime minister expressed support for Pakistan's stand on the Afghanistan problem. He said Sri Lanka greatly valued Pakistan's friendship and attached "high importance to regional co-operation."